

Number Nine

CRIMINAL MINDS



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Sean Phillips



by
**Ed Brubaker and
Sean Phillips**

**Colors by
Jacob
Phillips**

Cruel Summer

Part Five

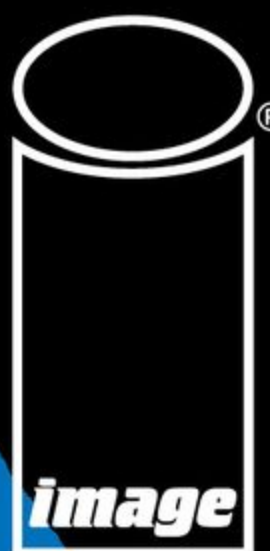


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DIGITAL EDITION.



Publication design by Sean Phillips

Restless Eyes

After an hour of hiding up in the ceiling, Ricky Lawless was really getting on Leo's nerves.



He could barely stop fidgeting when the manager was locking up down below...



SO... WHAT
THE FUCK,
MAN?

And he even tried to light a cigarette not long after that.



WHAT ARE WE
WAITING
FOR?

SHHHH...

CHILL
OUT.



C'MON... THE
DICKHEAD LEFT
FIFTEEN MINUTES
AGO.

LET'S DO
THIS.



HOLD ON.



WE WAIT
SEVEN MORE
MINUTES.

ARE YOU
FUCKING
KIDDING
ME?



NO...
WHAT IF THE
GUY **FORGOT**
SOMETHING?

WHAT IF HE
GETS TWO BLOCKS
AWAY AND **TURNS**
AROUND?











DAD -

STAY
OUT OF
IT, LEO.



LOOK, IF YOU
NEED SOME
CASH, YOU
CAN HAVE
IT...

BUT UNTIL YOU
GET CLEAN -
REALLY
CLEAN...



THEN I CAN'T
TRUST YOU
ENOUGH TO
WORK WITH
YOU.

THAT'S
NOT
FAIR.



I DON'T GIVE A
SHIT... YOU'RE A
RISK RIGHT
NOW, IVAN...



AND YOU'D BE THE
FIRST PERSON TO
POINT IT OUT IF WE
WERE TALKING
ABOUT ANYONE
ELSE.



YEAH... I GUESS...
SURE...

Leo hated
this...







And ever since Ivan had slipped back into heroin addiction, it was all wrong.



His dad was always stressed out, and more of a hardass.



Worried about making ends meet, worried about Ivan, worried about Leo.



Just fucking worried.



It was exhausting to be around... Claustrophobic.

AND YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO IF YOU DON'T HEAR FROM ME BY 10:30 THAT NIGHT?

YOU GET TO GNARLY'S PLACE AND YOU WAIT UNTIL HE HEARS SOMETHING.

C'MON, DAD... WE WENT OVER THIS ALREADY...

A man with dark, wavy hair is shown in profile, drinking from a green beer bottle. He is sitting at a table with a plate of food, including what looks like a burger and some green peas. He is holding a knife in his left hand. The background shows a kitchen with white cabinets and a tiled wall. The lighting is dramatic, with strong shadows.

Because Leo knows
what his dad is
doing...

The closer the heist gets,
the more his mind is running
down every possible way it
could go wrong.

So he's not even really
present at dinner... He's
in his head, planning.

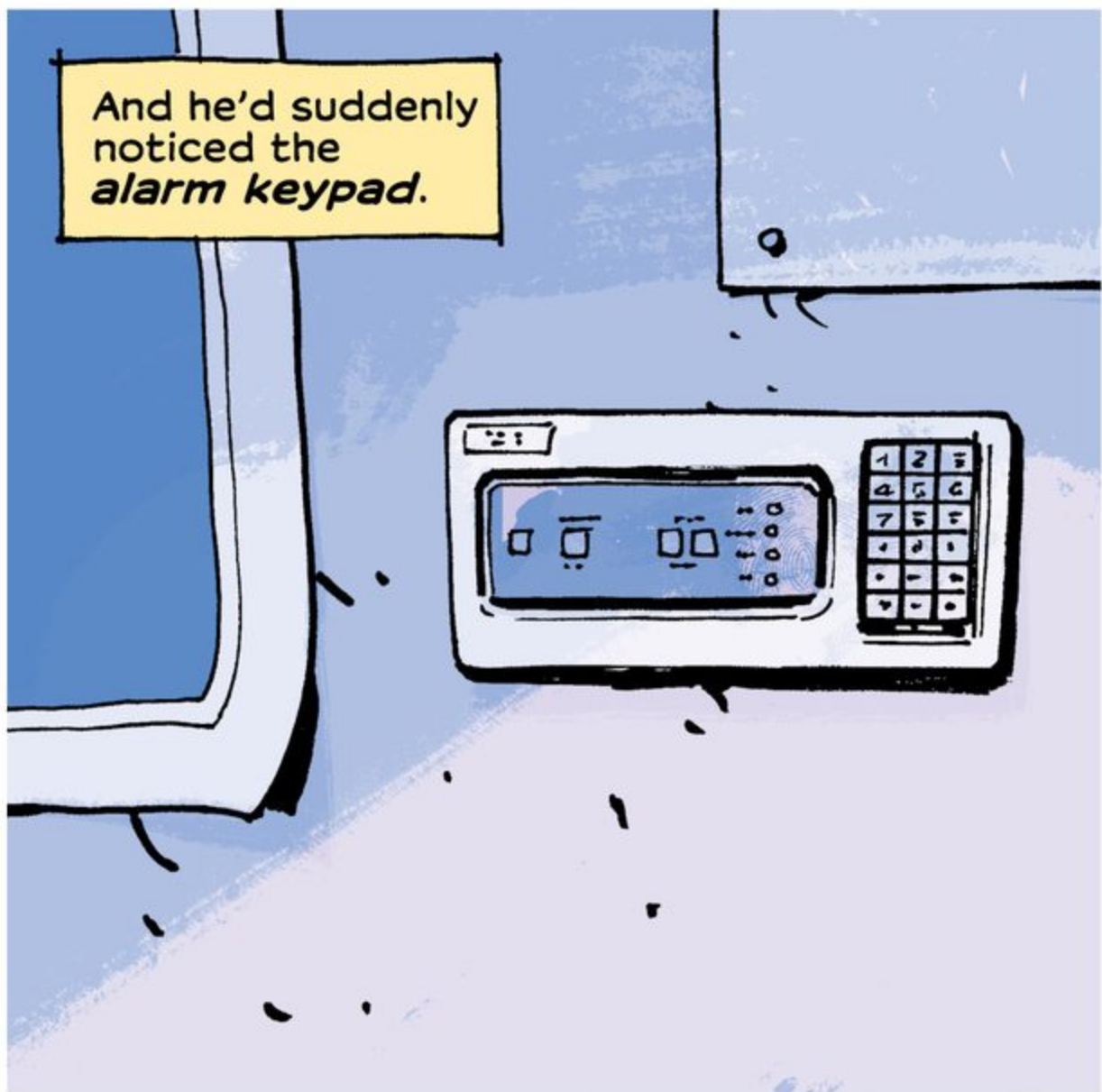
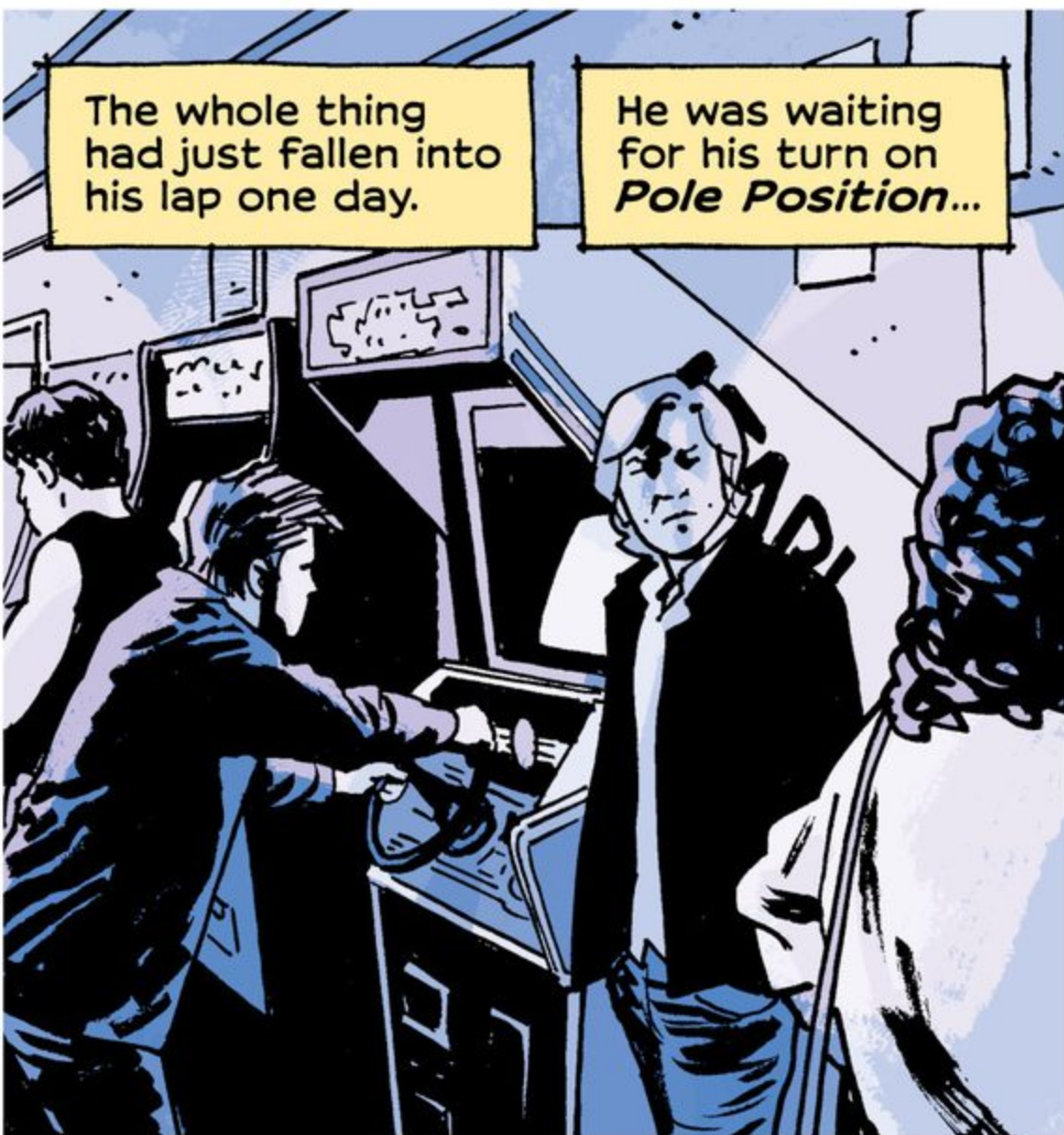
Trying to make
sure he stays
out of prison.

His dad spent six months
in lock-up when Leo was a
kid, and he sometimes
jokes that he'd rather
die than go back...

But it's that kind of joke
where there's nothing but
truth underneath it.

Leo can see
it in his eyes.

Nobody ever came
back from a *jail cell*
the same, he figured.





There was a poster near it that had come unstuck from the wall on one corner.



Like someone was constantly curling it back...



And that's where he found the code to turn off the alarm.



The manager was a huge stoner, so of course he'd hide it somewhere near the keypad.



After that, Leo started sort of absentmindedly making a list whenever they were there...



Where did they keep the money?

What day did they drop it at the bank?

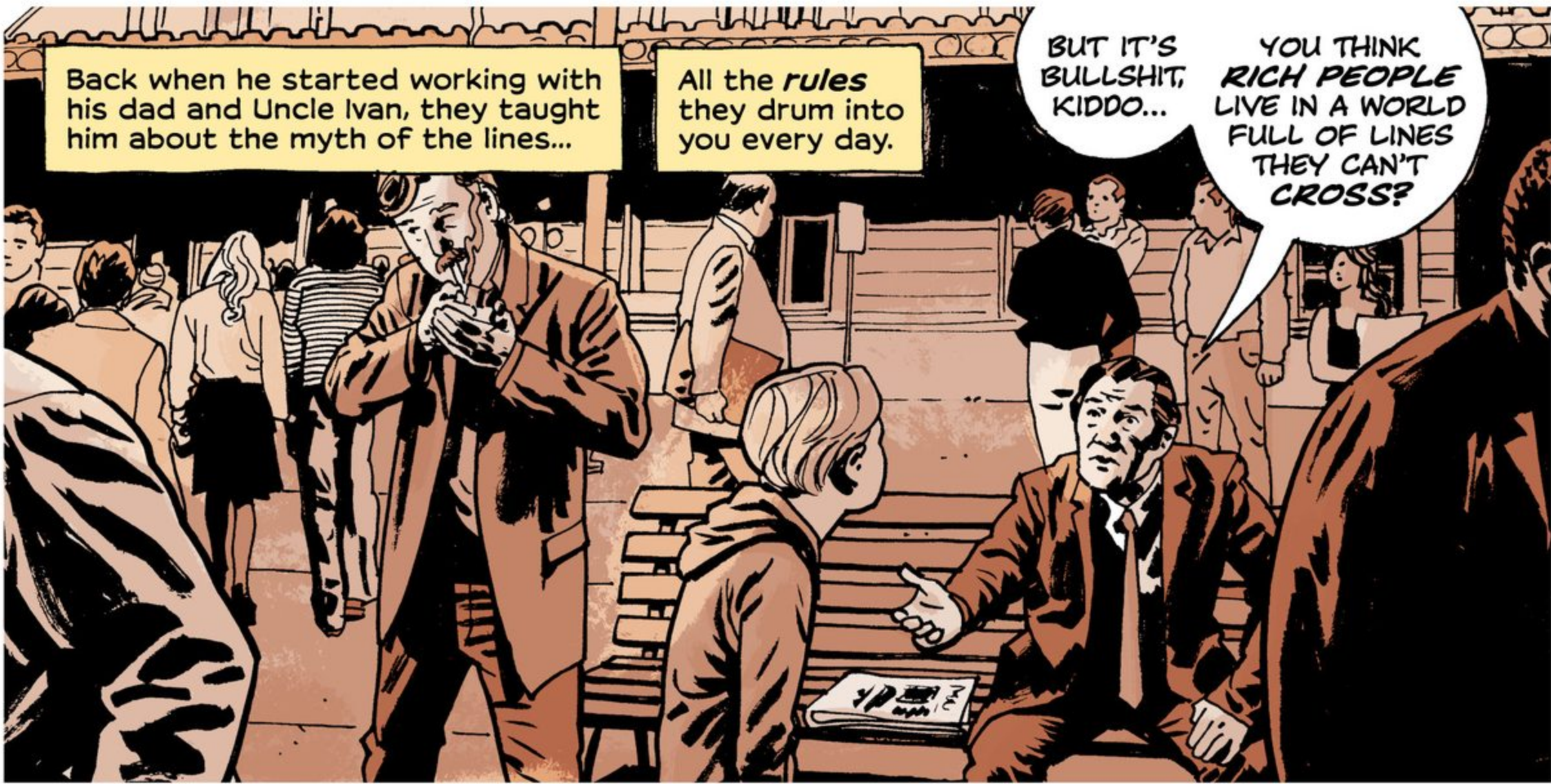
How could he get in?



This was when Leo was at his best...



When he was on the other side of the line.

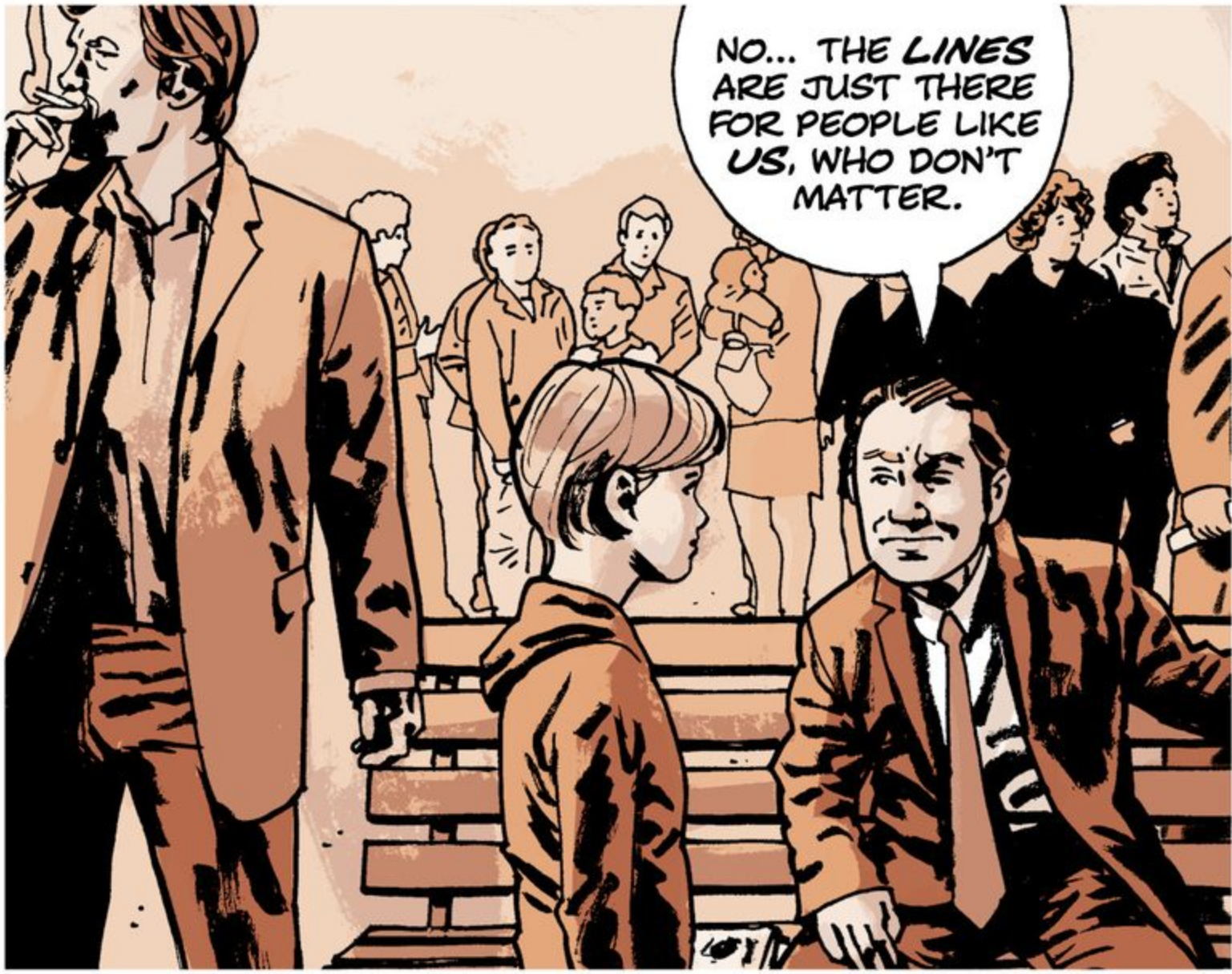


Back when he started working with his dad and Uncle Ivan, they taught him about the myth of the lines...

All the *rules* they drum into you every day.

BUT IT'S BULLSHIT, KIDDO...

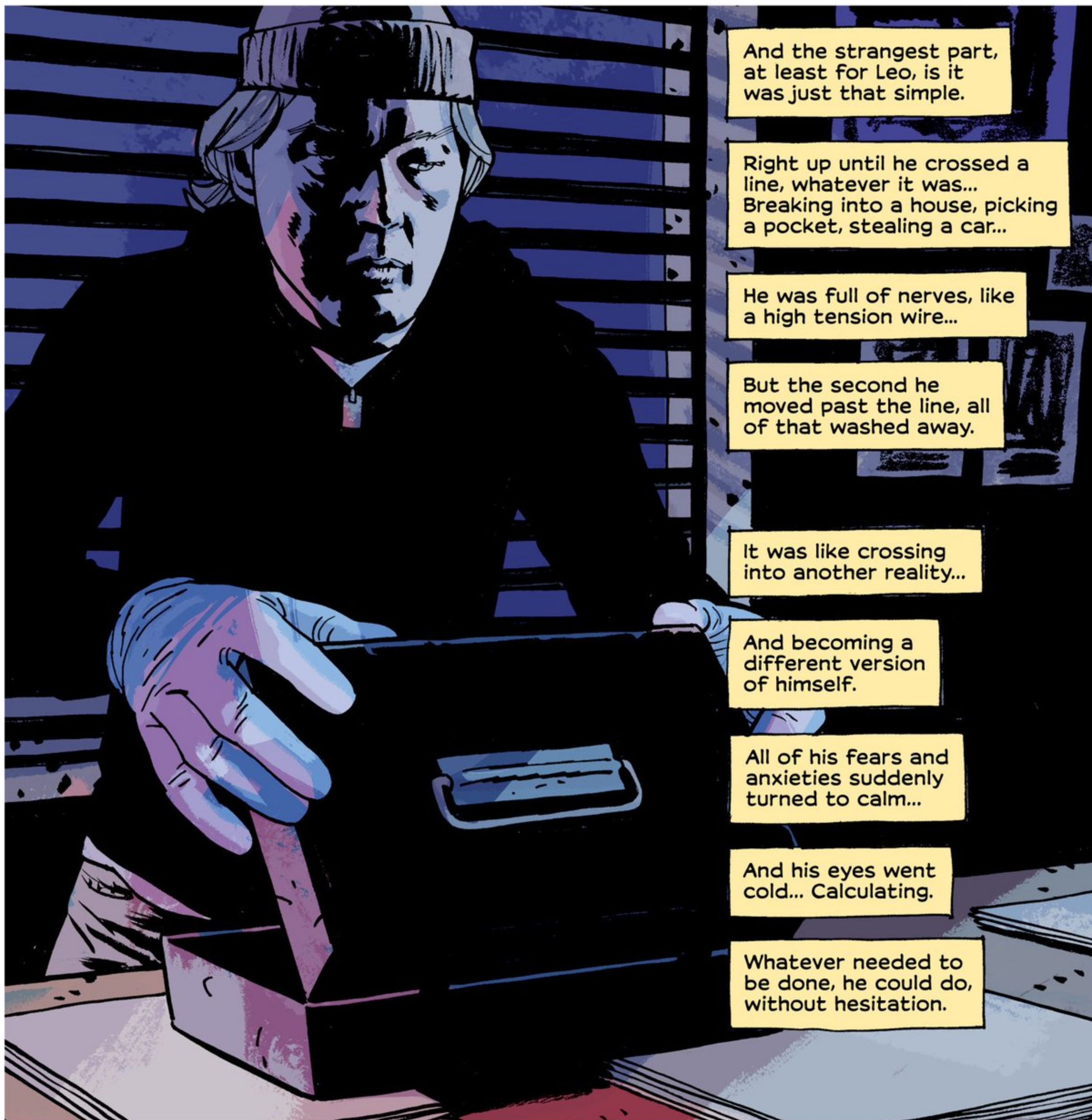
YOU THINK RICH PEOPLE LIVE IN A WORLD FULL OF LINES THEY CAN'T CROSS?



NO... THE *LINES* ARE JUST THERE FOR PEOPLE LIKE US, WHO DON'T MATTER.



SO STOP LETTING THEM CONTROL YOU.



And the strangest part, at least for Leo, is it was just that simple.

Right up until he crossed a line, whatever it was... Breaking into a house, picking a pocket, stealing a car...

He was full of nerves, like a high tension wire...

But the second he moved past the line, all of that washed away.

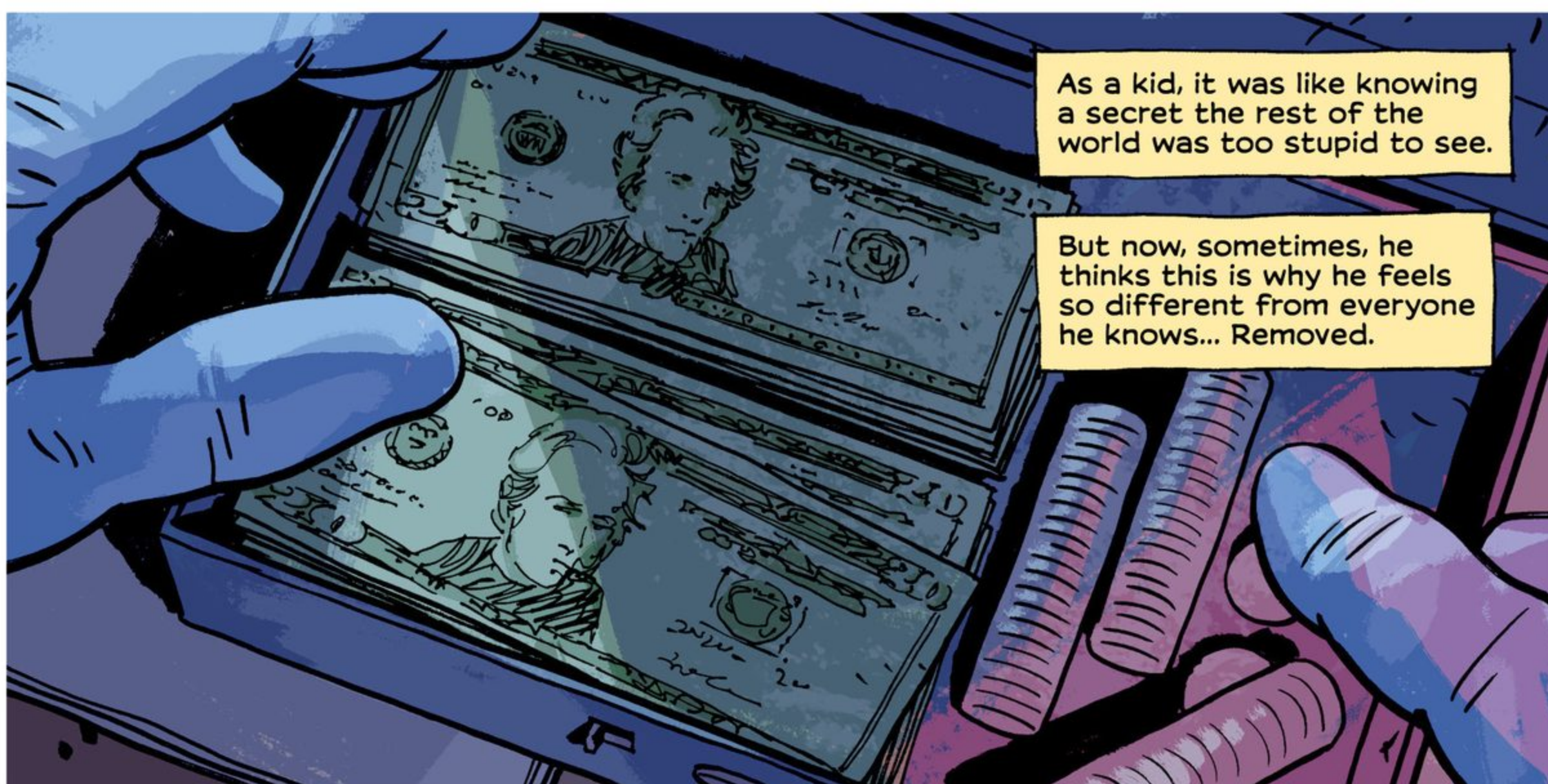
It was like crossing into another reality...

And becoming a different version of himself.

All of his fears and anxieties suddenly turned to calm...

And his eyes went cold... Calculating.

Whatever needed to be done, he could do, without hesitation.



As a kid, it was like knowing a secret the rest of the world was too stupid to see.

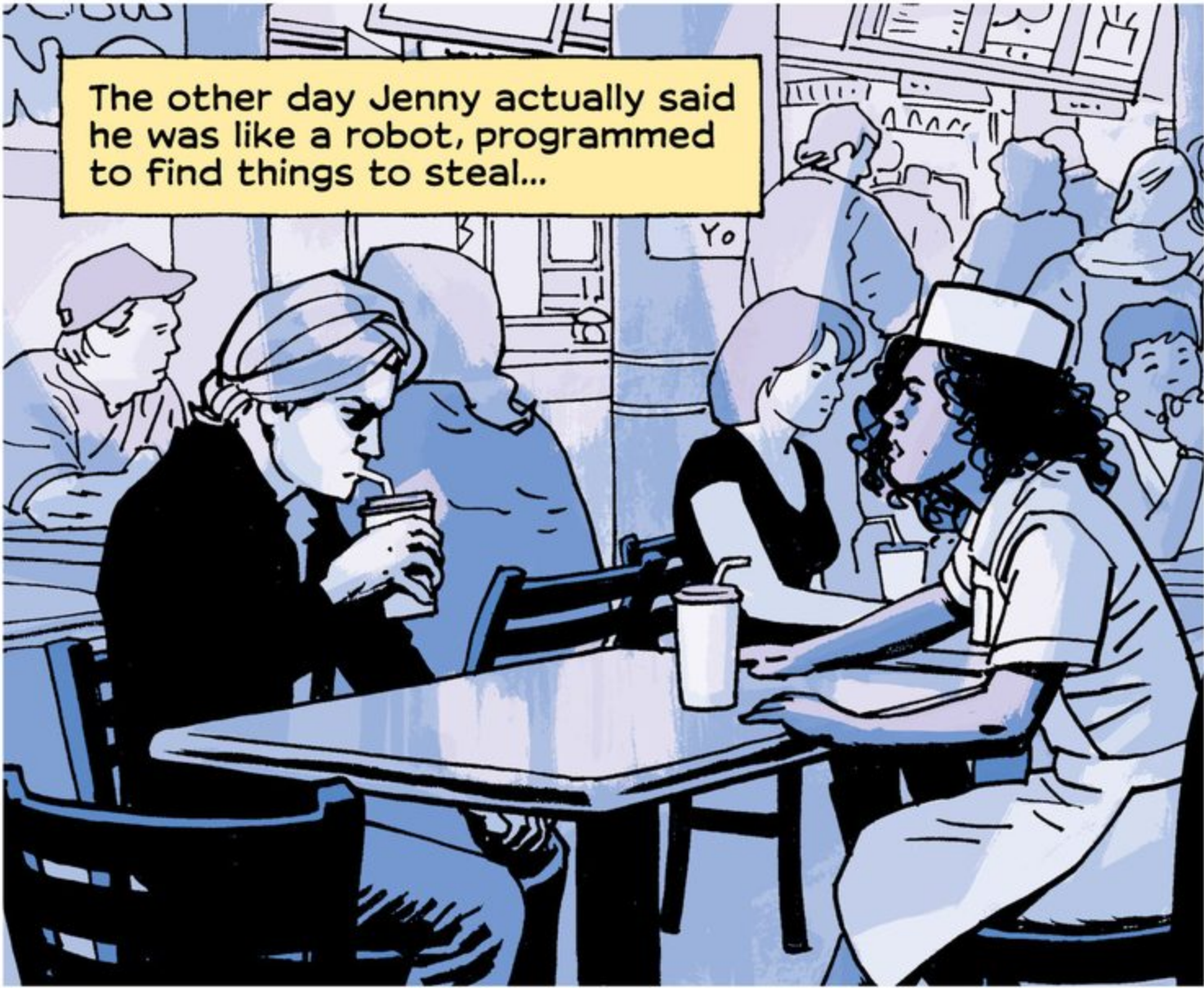
But now, sometimes, he thinks this is why he feels so different from everyone he knows... Removed.



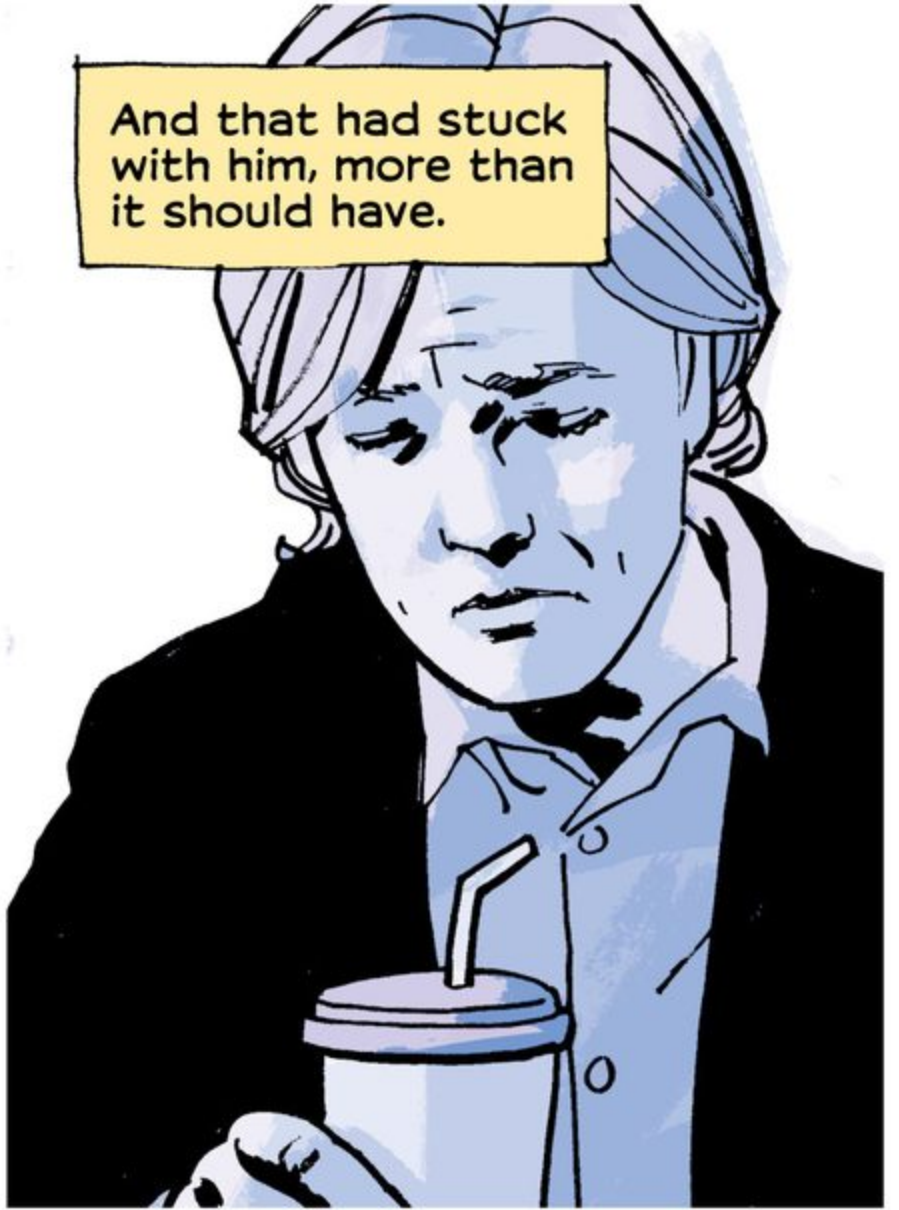
Because his eyes have always been looking past the lines...

Waiting to go back to that calm place.

AH...
SHIT.



The other day Jenny actually said he was like a robot, programmed to find things to steal...



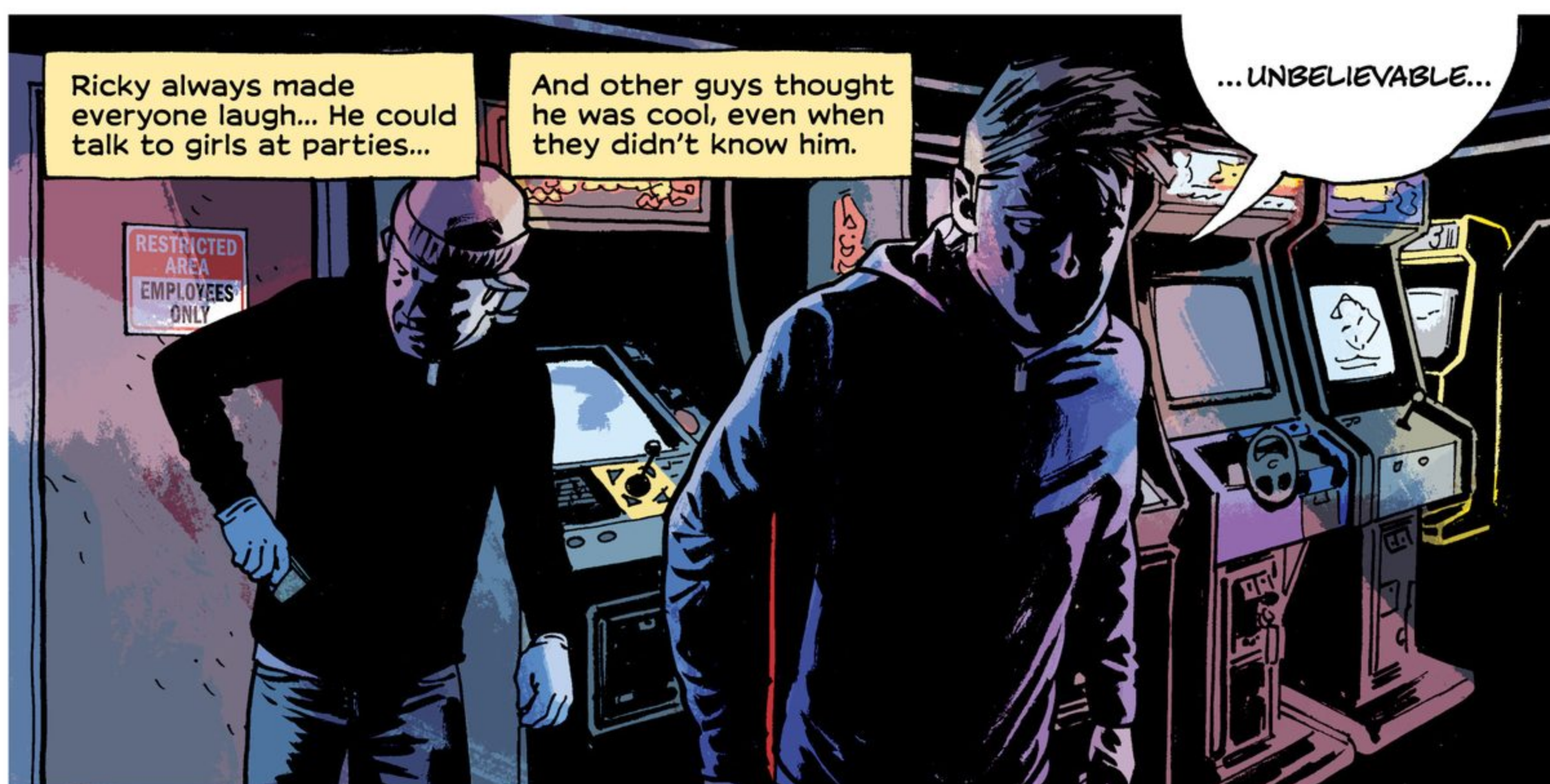
And that had stuck with him, more than it should have.



Is that what his friends really thought about him?

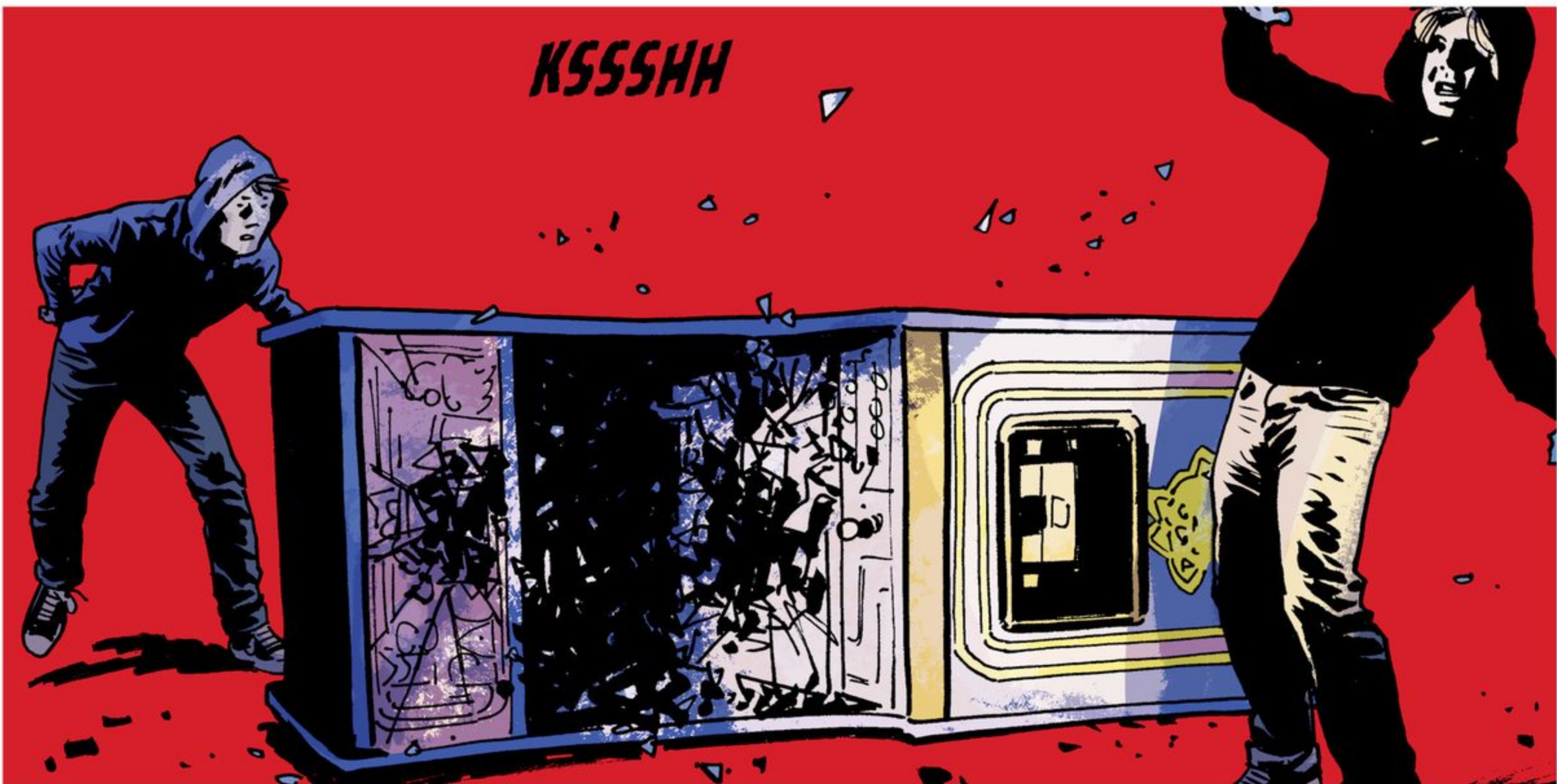
WHAT'S UP?
HOW DID WE DO?

NOT SO GREAT...
THERE'S ONLY ABOUT SIX HUNDRED BUCKS HERE.











Leo's still hearing
the echoes of the
shattered glass...



Still
recoiling...



When he sees
the gun in
Ricky's hand.



But it doesn't
stop the guard...



It just pisses
him off.



Leo wants to
run... or scream...



But...



...He
doesn't.



Instead he crosses the line again... And he suddenly knows exactly what to do.

STOP!



OH... YOU WANNA BE NEXT, FUCKER?



NO. DO YOU WANT TO GET SHOT?



OKAY. NOW STEP BACK AND KEEP YOUR HANDS UP OR I'M GOING TO SHOOT YOU IN THE LEG.

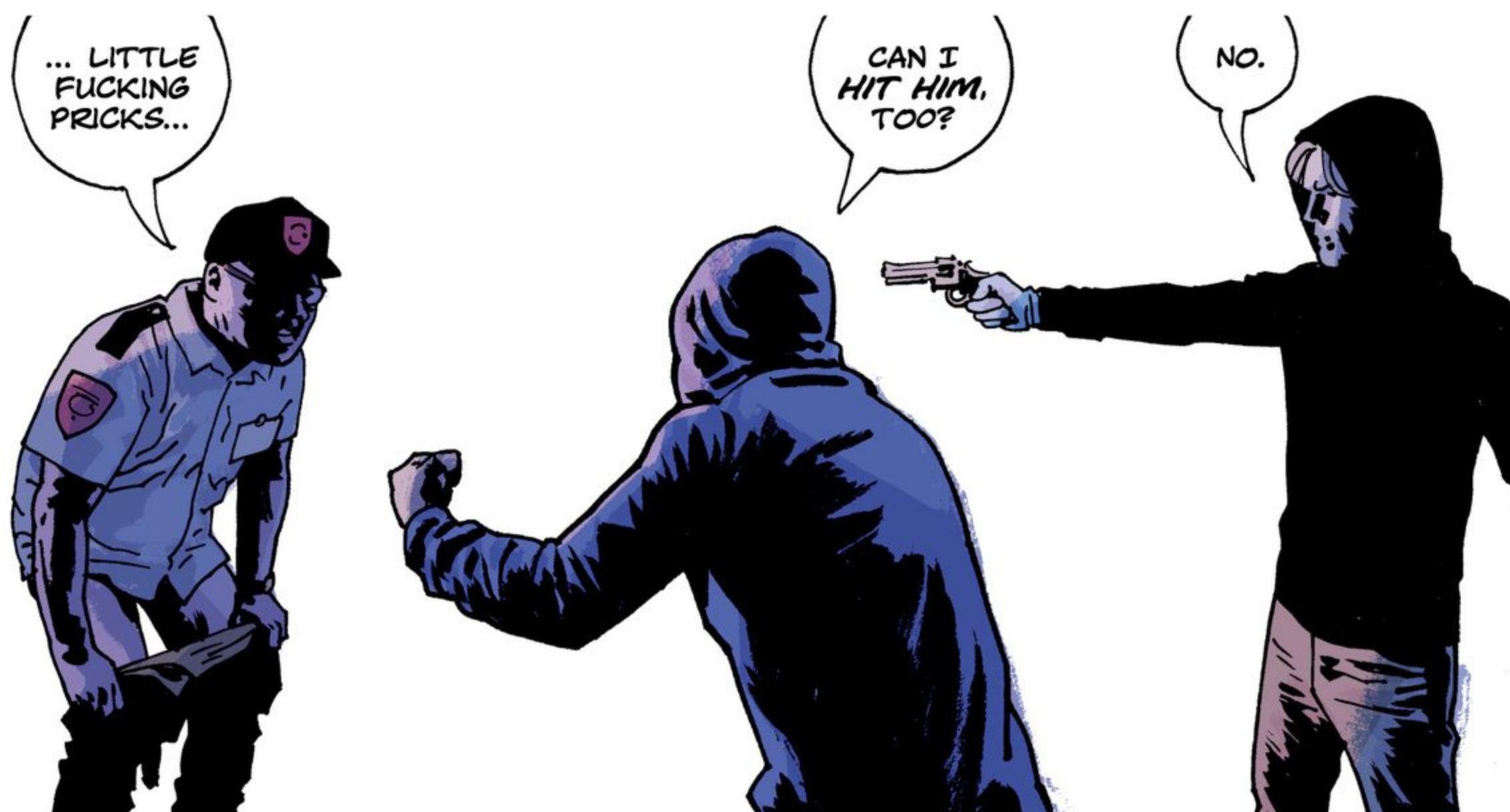


JESUS... JUST GET OUTTA HERE... YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO THIS.

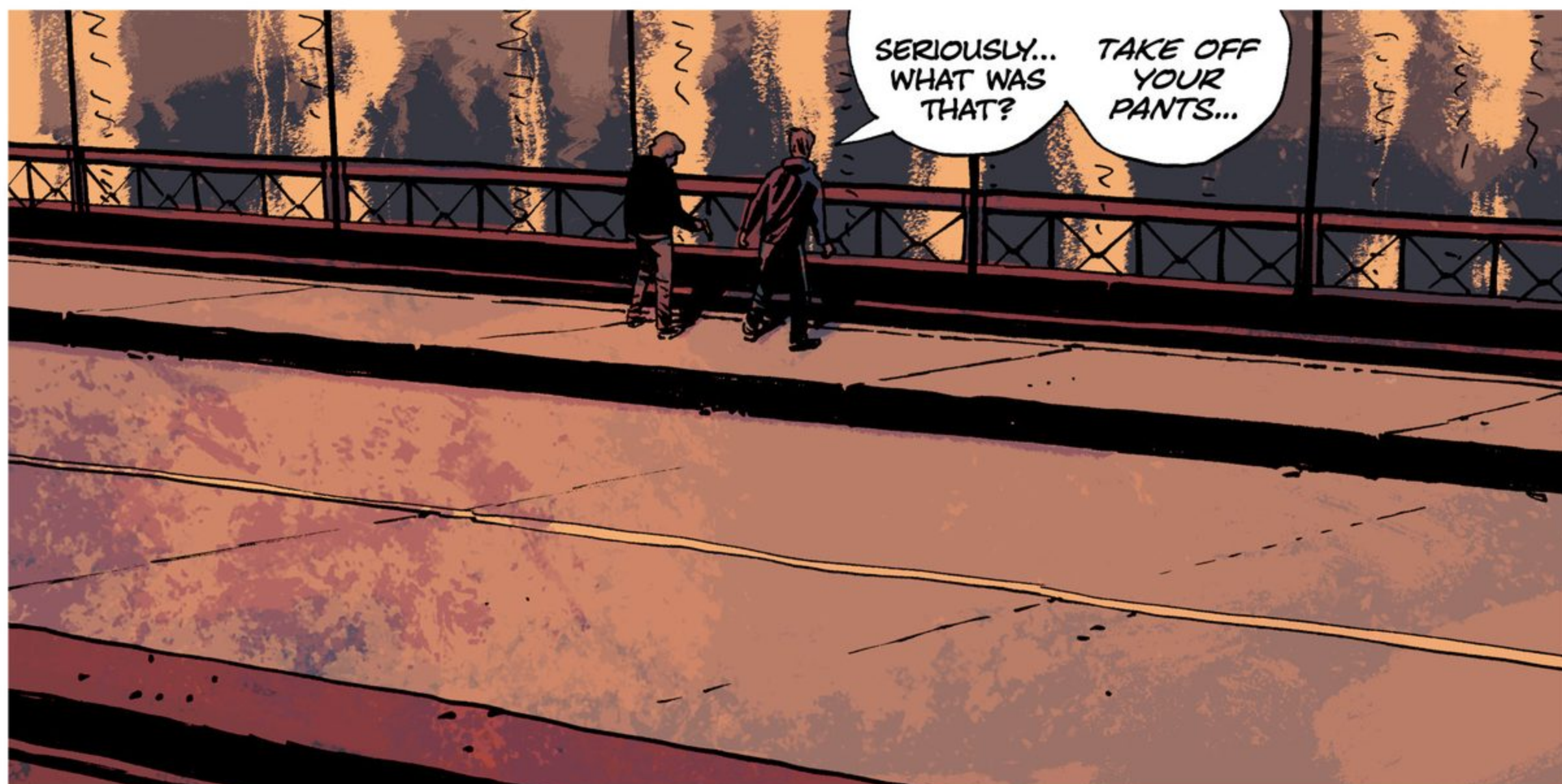


THERE'S A POLICE STATION TWO BLOCKS AWAY...

I CAN'T JUST LEAVE YOU HERE.









To Be Continued

Well, that was pretty fucked up, right?

This is one of my favorite issues so far, because it's the first time I've written about Leo since issue 5 of our original run, way back in 2006. I mean, we've seen him a few times, but this time we actually get into his head a bit, we're not seeing him from other people's point of view. And Leo was the original lead character that led us into this entire crime world.



Next issue the threads of this big story finally come together, and nothing will ever be the same, as you'll see soon.

In between issues, I took a big trip to Portugal for a comicon and had a great time, met a lot of very nice readers and my Portuguese publisher, and saw a lot of the country. Thanks to everyone who made it so easy and fun, and everyone who stood in line in the heat to have me misspell their name on a book. It

was a great time, and the flight back was long enough for me to catch up on some TV I downloaded for the trip...

UNBELIEVEABLE on Netflix is not an easy thing to watch, because it's about two detectives trying to solve a series of rapes, and it's based on a true story... but the way the story is told and what is shown and not shown, make it work, and the performances are incredible. I've been a fan of Merritt Wever's work since MICHAEL CLAYTON but here she feels so real and full of soul that I would happily watch three more seasons of her and Toni Collette solving crimes right now.

LEGION is a show I saved to watch later, basically. I watched the entire first season in one sitting, or close to it – I might have slept in there somewhere – but when the second season was even more out there and mindfucky, I just didn't have the bandwidth, so I bought the seasons on Amazon and saved them. Now that I've found the time to actually process the show, I can't really recommend it enough. Noah Hawley has now twice created something that makes me want to kill him a bit. LEGION asks a lot of its viewers, but if you give it the time, it's a hell of a ride.

And also – My friend GREG RUCKA (we did GOTHAM CENTRAL together) has a new TV show out right now, STUMPTOWN, starring Cobey Smulders, based on his comic of the same name. It's been getting great press so far, and I'm looking forward to it, so you should check that out, too. And buy the STUMPTOWN books, too, they're great.

Give these shows your attention, please.

Every month or so I get an email like this, so I thought I'd answer it in public this time...

*Hello, my name is Corey, and I'm a huge fan of Brubaker's work. **Gotham Central** and **Criminal** are my favorite. I'm writing and drawing my own indie-alternative comic and would like to know what is the best route to take getting started, who should I take it to when I'm done and how can I continue making comics for a living?*

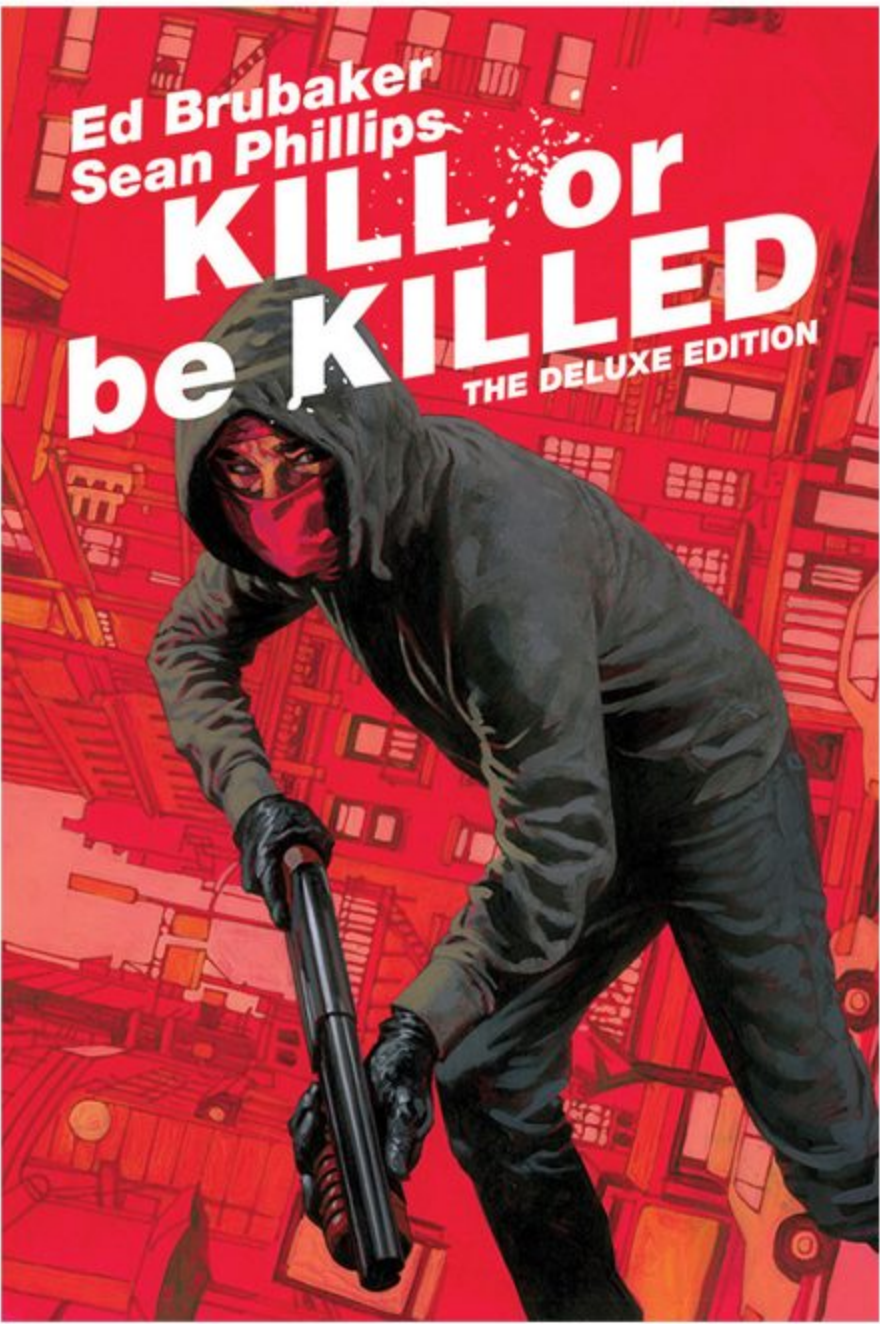
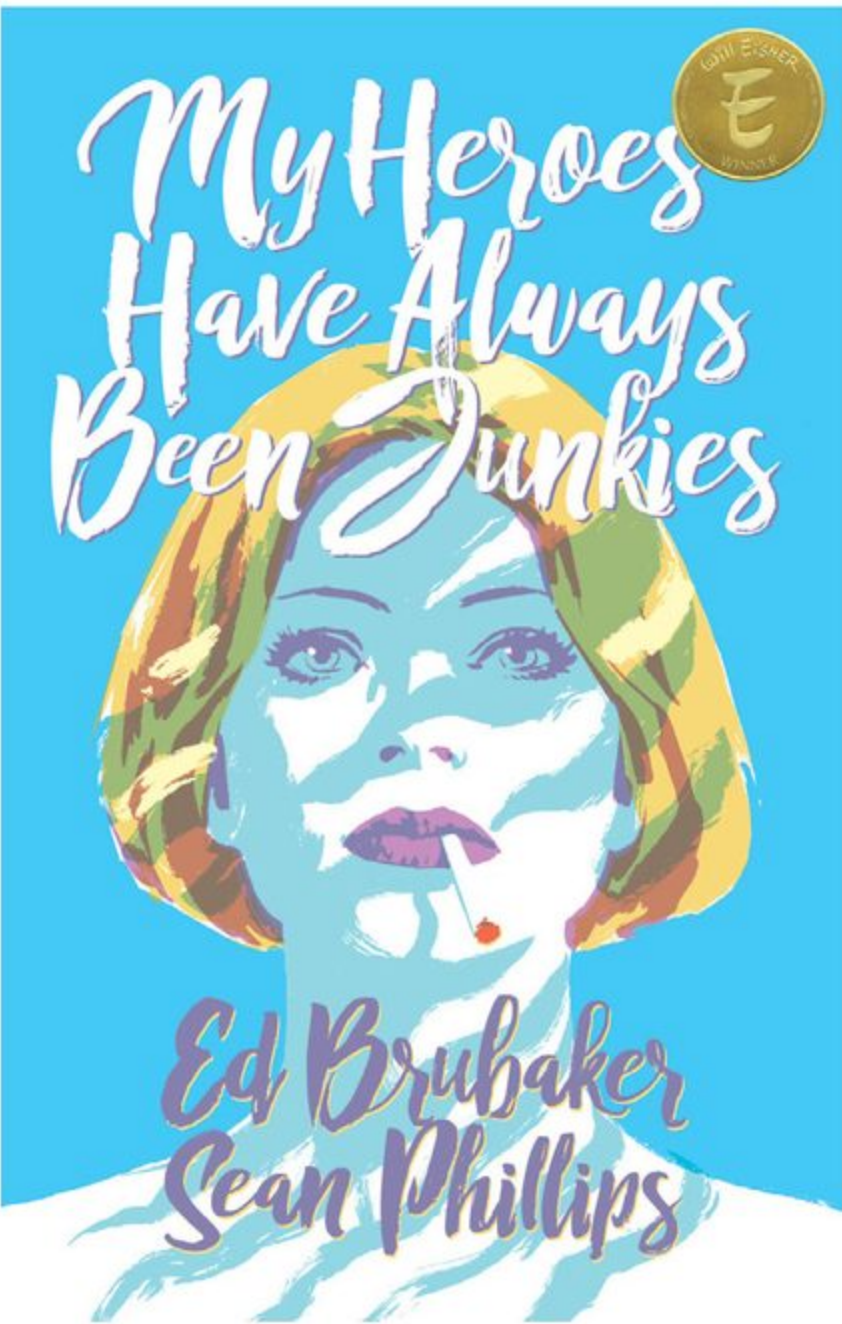
That's a lot of questions in one, Corey, so I'll take a swing and hope it's helpful. The best way to make a living in comics as a writer and artist is to just make your own comics and put them out there. Print mini-comics and hand them out at conventions to editors, if that's something you're up for. If you're good, and you get lucky enough to get your work into the right hands, and you don't give up, then you might be able to make a decent living, maybe. But it's not an easy thing to do, and literally everyone I know that makes a living in comics got here thru a combination of talent and luck and not giving up when other people would have. Just be warned, I have known a lot of talented artists and writers that couldn't make a living doing comics. I always feel like

comics chooses you, not the other way around. If you are meant to do comics, you just keep doing them, in spite of how hard it is.

Sometimes people ask me "how do I get to write Spider-Man?" and the answer to that is DO NOT write a Spider-Man script and send it to Marvel. That will get you nowhere. Write some comics that aren't Spider-Man, that show you can tell a story that keeps a reader engaged, and get them drawn by the best artist you can find. This will not always be cheap or possible. When I started out, I drew my own stories, so all I needed was the cost of paper and ink (and printing, since there was no internet). You may need to pay an artist to draw your story for you, just like you might need to finance a short film if you want to be a director. Once you have proven you can tell an engaging story in comics, then you might start getting hired to do jobs like that - again, if you're lucky and in the right place at the right time. And if that's a road you really want to go down, then go in eyes open, knowing that Work-For-Hire jobs are owned by the company, not the creator.

Making a living in indie comics is even harder and rarer than making a living doing books for Marvel or DC. There are the odd big hit books, but most of the creators I know that manage to do it just work constantly, going from book to book, continuing to put out material and push themselves to try new things. New books drive readers to your older books, and that can build into a steady audience, but it takes time and a lot of persistence and hard work. Almost no one gets here overnight. Even Robert Kirkman just kept putting out books until one of them managed to build an audience. And that's what he still does, and he's the most successful creator in the history of comics, I think.

In new book news, we have both the paperback edition of MY HEROES HAVE ALWAYS BEEN JUNKIES and the KILL OR BE KILLED Deluxe Edition hardcover at the printer right now, and they should be out November 13th. This is what they'll look like, when you see them on the shelves...

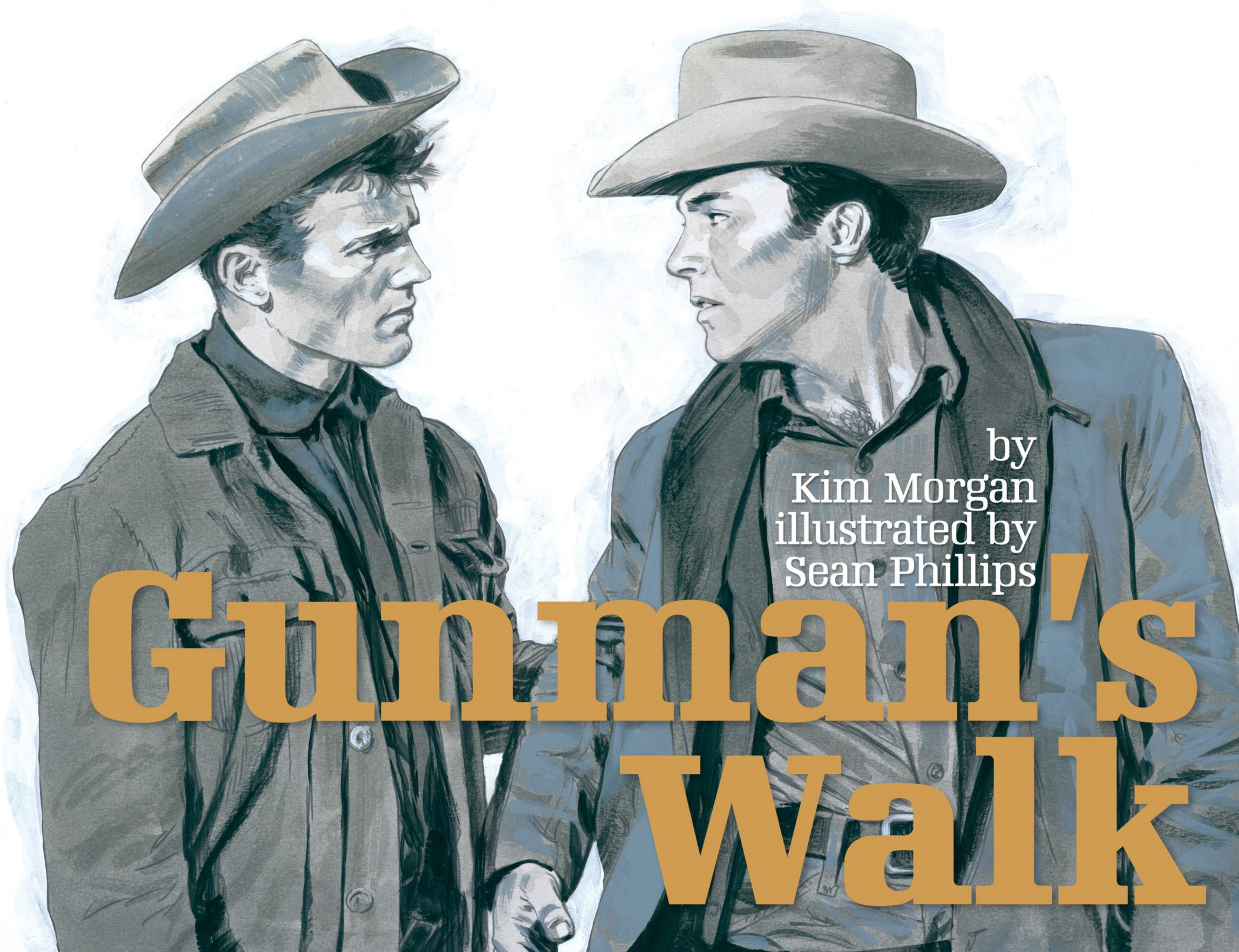


We did something new on the JUNKIES trade, and went for French flaps, so even though it's a paperback it still feels a bit different. And we added the Eisner Winner stamp, obviously.

In this month's back pages we have a great article on GUNMAN'S WALK once again by regular contributor Kim Morgan, with some real standout illos by Sean.

That's it for this issue, write to us with questions and comments at: criminalcomic@gmail.com and we'll be back next month with issue 10, where the whole plot kicks into a new gear.



An illustration of two men in cowboy hats, facing each other in profile. The man on the left is wearing a dark coat and a dark hat. The man on the right is wearing a dark coat and a light-colored hat. The background is a light, textured blue.

by
Kim Morgan
illustrated by
Sean Phillips

Gunman's walk

"Look, times don't change in this country where you breed a man soft... without any spirit in him. A man's like a horse. If he don't buck the first time you put a saddle on him, he ain't worth having, you know that!"— Lee Hackett (Van Heflin)

In Phil Karlson's *Gunman 's Walk* – you wonder how hard old rancher Lee Hackett (Van Heflin) handled his sons. He likely belted them – he even makes causal reference of it to one of the boys when they return home after a journey on their horses (opening the movie with beautiful whistling). That's just how things were back then and the boys are tough and grown up now and why would they question any such thing? According to their father – why would they question *anything* their father espouses? Their father knows *all*. All. Or so he thinks.

Physical punishment for kids is awful, yes, but that is not what is *really* wrong in this family dynamic. So, what else? What else did Lee instill or pummel into these boys that made them come out the way they did? (There's no mother around – we assume Lee is a widower). And why did they come out so differently?

One, the younger son, Davy (James Darren), is a sensitive sort – in later years (this liberal-minded western came out in 1958 – story by Ric Hardman, screenplay by Frank S. Nugent) Davy might be considered a proto-hippie – a peacenik. He doesn't care much for competition, he's calm and thoughtful, and he's not woefully insulted if he's not the best shot. He, in fact, doesn't even *like* wearing his gun – he sees no use for it save for putting down a horse that's sick or maybe killing a threatening rattle snake. So why does he have to wear his holster and gun around town? People think it's outmoded and, frankly, maybe silly. They stare, he says. His disappointed dad, Lee (both sons call their father "Lee" and not dad) says something like, let 'em stare. That's how the Hacketts built this town, that's how they kept reign, that's how it was, and how it should stay.
Intimidating.

To Lee, guns are *good*, goddammit. You gotta stride around with that gun – it gives you that extra... potency.

Lee – this is a man who is fearful of losing his edge, perhaps fearful of aging, fearful of limpness. Guns are often discussed as phallic (and perhaps too easily at times – but perhaps not since, well, it just seems so frequently obvious) but in *Gunman's Walk*, yes indeed, the gun really *does* seem to represent the phallus. In Lee's eyes – you're not going to walk the same without one. You're not a real man.

With that, Davy shoots some bottles his dad sets up and sees how rusty his son has gotten. And we wonder if Davy is missing on purpose – if he's just so sick of this gun business. Is Lee embarrassed of him? It's a sad thing to think because Davy is a loving young man – he's not going to poison his dad with too much resentment – nor his older brother – not right away. He is trying. But after we meet that older brother, we wonder how he came out so sweet.

That older brother, Ed (a fantastic Tab Hunter) is the ace shot. He *likes* wearing his gun. He practices his moves in the mirror – something Davy makes gentle fun of him over. Ed seems to enjoy scaring people, and really, he wants to scare his dad. In fact, he wants to *beat* his dad – beat him in every game that father has thrown at him – and you sense that kid has been thrown too much. Ed is tall and blonde and handsome and he never seems happy. Never. Even when he's singing in a saloon, drunk: "So many nights for havin' fun/ So many fights I haven't won/ There's not enough notches on my gun/ I'm a runaway/I'm a runaway..." he seems out of control, not joyful. Vaguely sociopathic. Not entirely all awful. And yet, without hope. Because there's something deeply sad inside this "bad seed" – something his dad planted.



He could snap at any minute and he does. Quite a few times. He's mad at the world, he's mad at himself, he's even mad at something mysterious, but he's mostly mad at his father.

When Ed rides up to the ranch with his brother, he lets another man brush down his horse. Lee is angry and says:

"Listen son, you let a man do things for you, things you should be doing yourself, and sooner or later he's gonna get the idea that he's a better man than you are. Now you remember that."

A better man. No one should be or even *think* so. Well, except Lee. Lee is better than everyone, including his sons. Ed, as we see from the get go, is deeply resentful of this. Even hateful. When his dad is setting up a can to shoot – Ed shoots it right out of Lee's hand – and when Lee's back is turned. He could have killed his father. Lee is furious. And then ... he lets it go. He just lets it go. He smiles a somewhat charming, somewhat overcompensating chuckle that we'll see a lot in this movie. Boys will be boys. All that.

In a later, beautifully-directed scene, we see Lee at a saloon with his buddies, laughing his amiable/slightly sinister Van Heflin laugh, and Ed sits grim faced, staring at his father's reflection in the saloon mirror. He then shoots his dad's reflection. It's a dramatic gesture and should be a warning to Lee – but Lee takes it in stride. Or does he? That reflection is what Ed will later feel – he is a shadow compared to his father, and he's coiled up like a black snake, a dark cloud wandering, wondering who he is. In a way, Ed is shooting himself too (after all, Ed likes to look in mirrors). Ed hates Lee but he must love him too. Lee *loves* Ed – he "loves" him so much that he hires someone to lie when Lee "accidentally" shoves a half-Native American cowboy (Bert Convy) off a cliff on a cattle drive. Ed is after a beautiful white mare and that other cowboy got in the way.

That beautiful white mare stands stark and haunting in this movie— behold a pale horse – Ed is chasing death.

Things just build and build after this. Davy falls in love with Cecily "Clee" Chouard (Kathryn Grant), a half-French, half-Sioux woman whom both his racist brother and father refer contemptuously to as a "half-breed." She's the sister of the dead cowboy and Davy starts siding with her family more than his own... This is unacceptable to Lee. Not a surprise.

And Ed is just going crazier – the more he runs rampant in town, acts his own unhinged way, the angrier at his father he becomes. And himself. In the end the shadow must be killed – by the father – it's a shocking and disarmingly moving ending and makes *Gunman's Walk* something of a masterpiece.

Karlson, who directed some superb tough-as-nails noirs (*99 River Street*, *Kansas City Confidential* and *The Phenix City Story*) – working from writers Hardman and Nugent – seems to wonder why in hell do these people have to be so violent? Does it solve anything?

This is a film questioning authority; looking at how we blindly believe in institutions – one of them being "manhood," domination, the way one moves through the world (do you walk with a gun?). And Karlson gives Heflin, Darren and Hunter plenty to explore here – these are fascinating character studies, both deeply human and symbolic.

Heflin's Lee – god knows what he did to his sons and god knows why he is so obsessed with Ed. What is going on there? There's an inverse to Martin Ritt's *Hud* here – Heflin's character puts up with so much regarding Ed, irritated by his gentler son, Davy, while Melvyn Douglas' righteousness clashes with his bad boy son (whom Douglas does not love – which messes up *his* son – that dad has got to account for that too). You get the feeling that Heflin's Lee would get along well with the cynicism and corruption of Paul Newman's *Hud*. But would *Hud* hate him too? Probably.

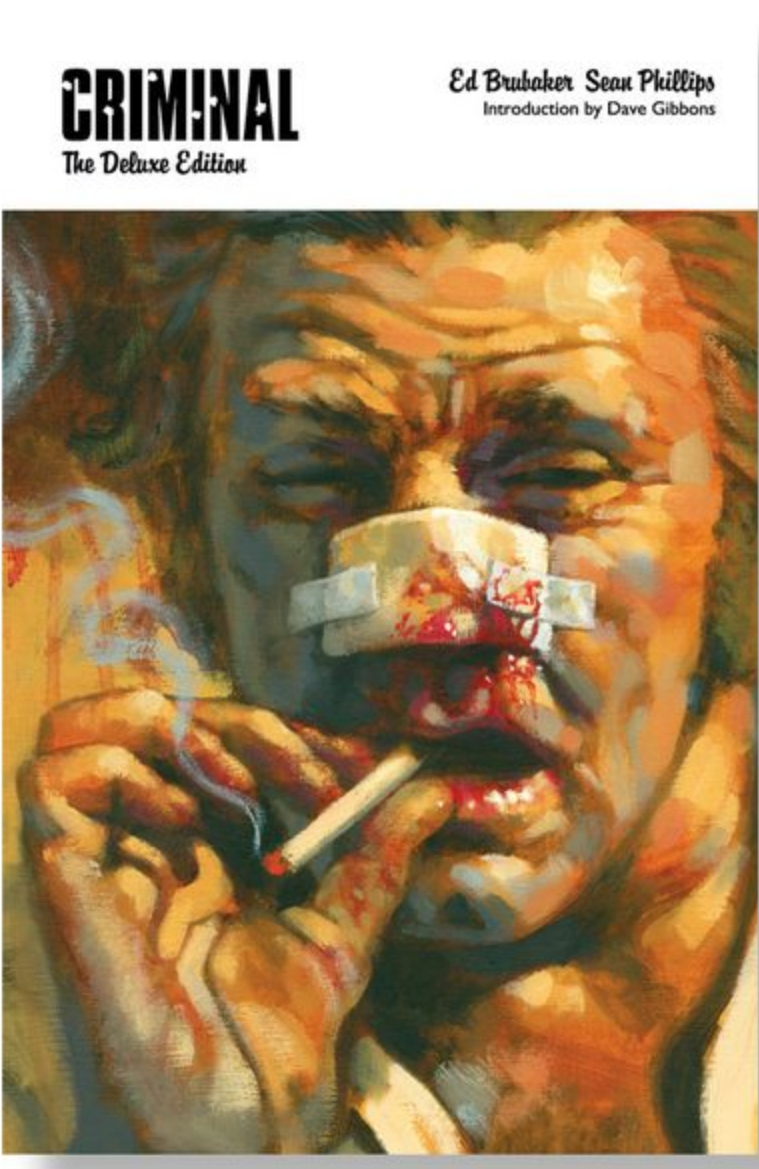
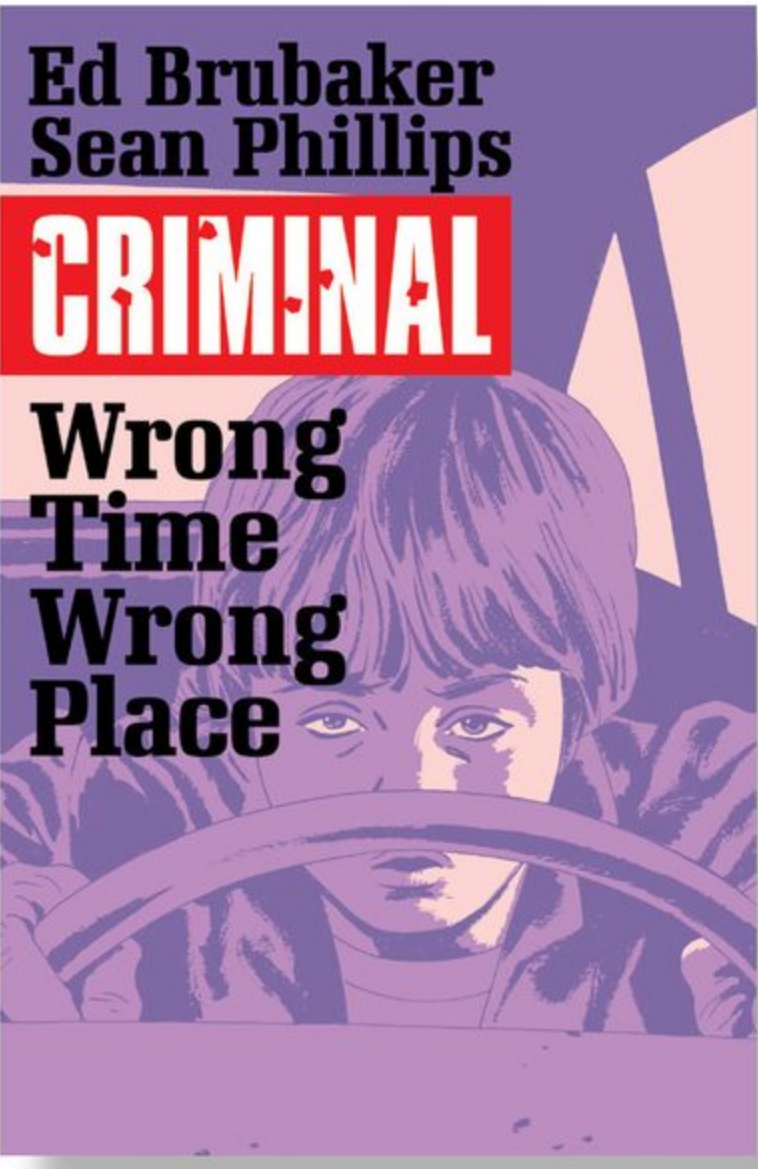
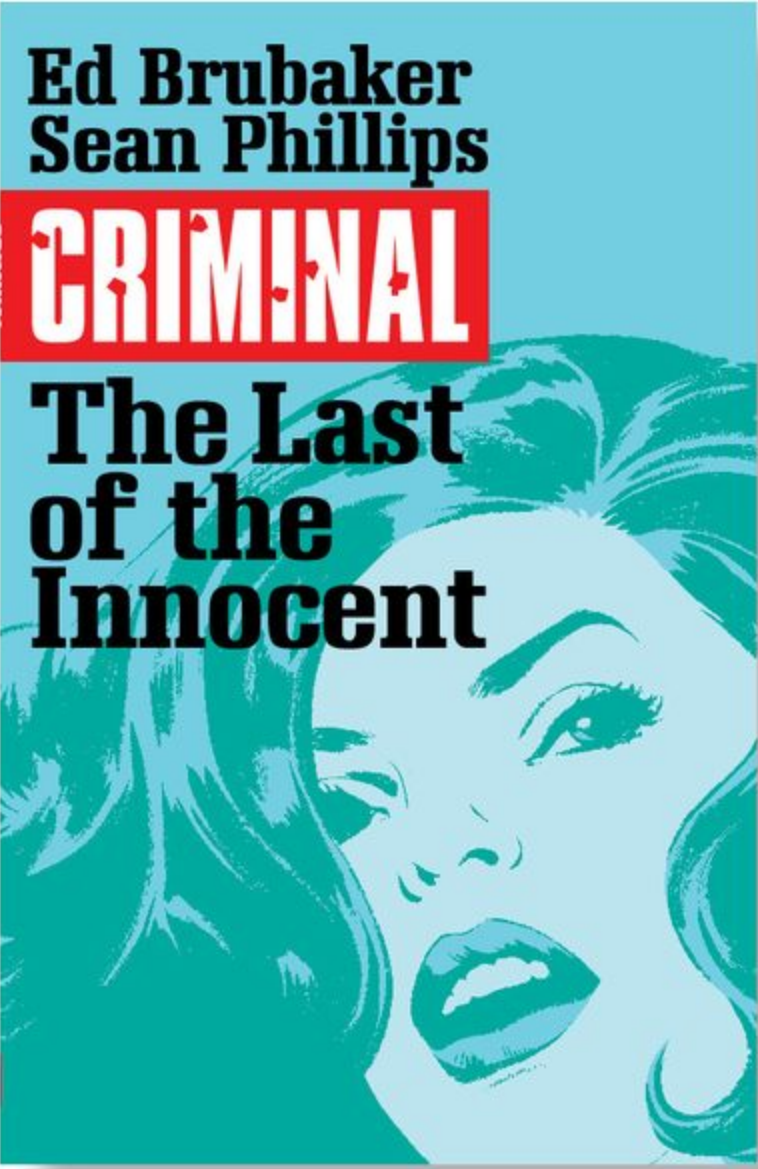
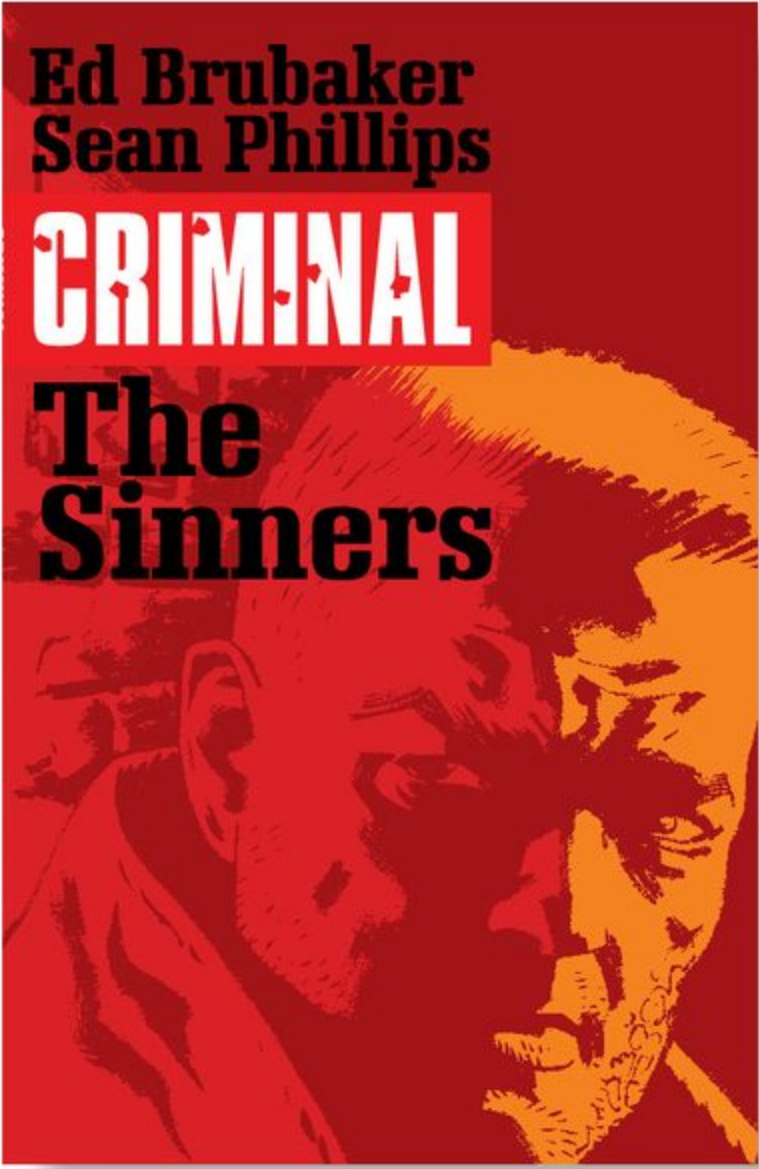
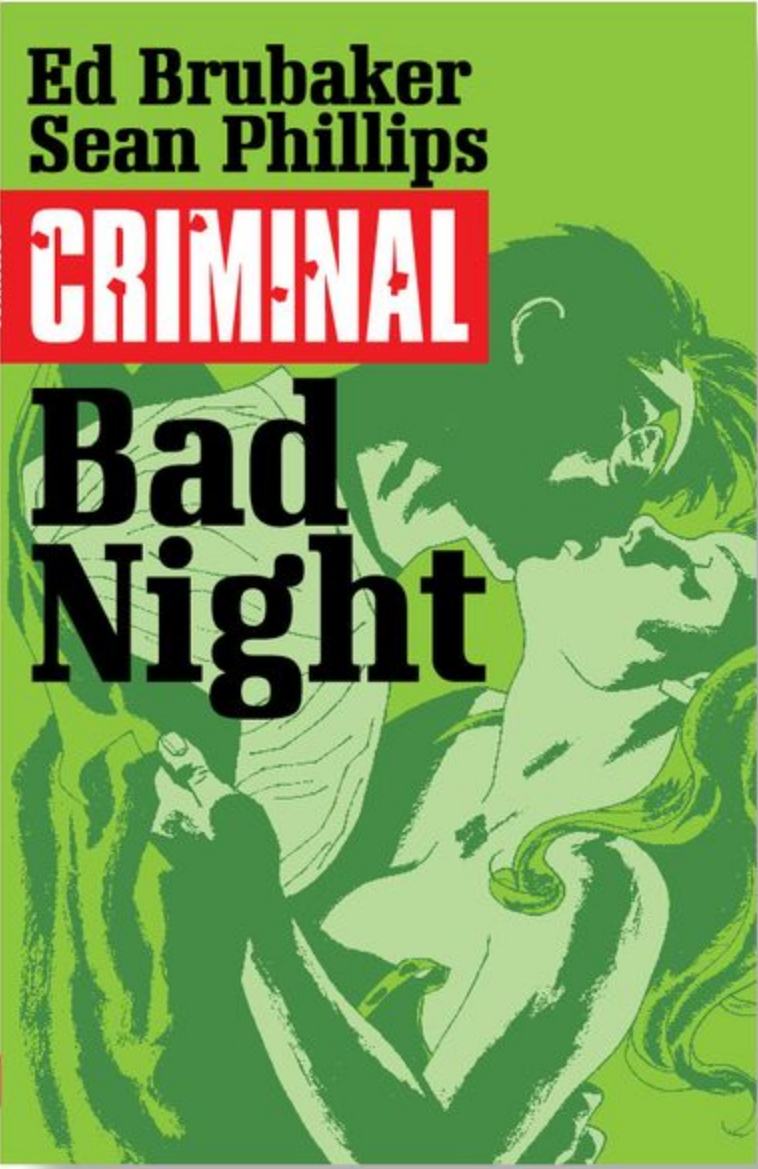
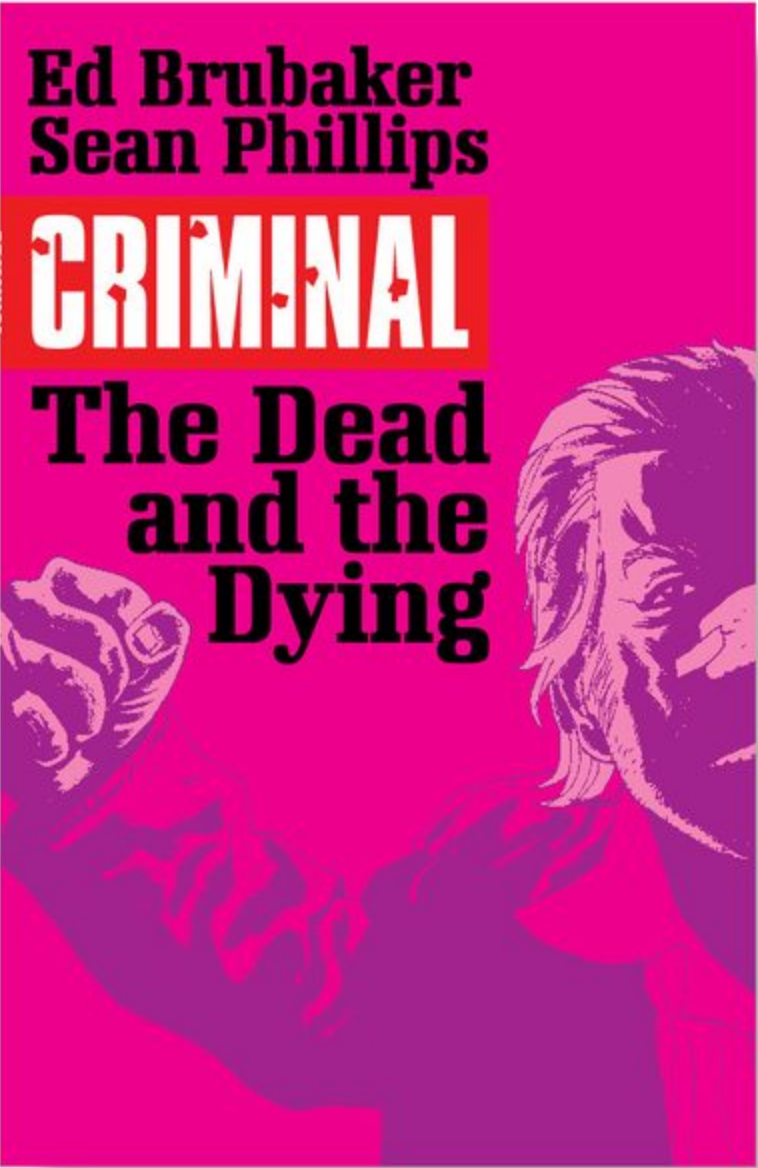
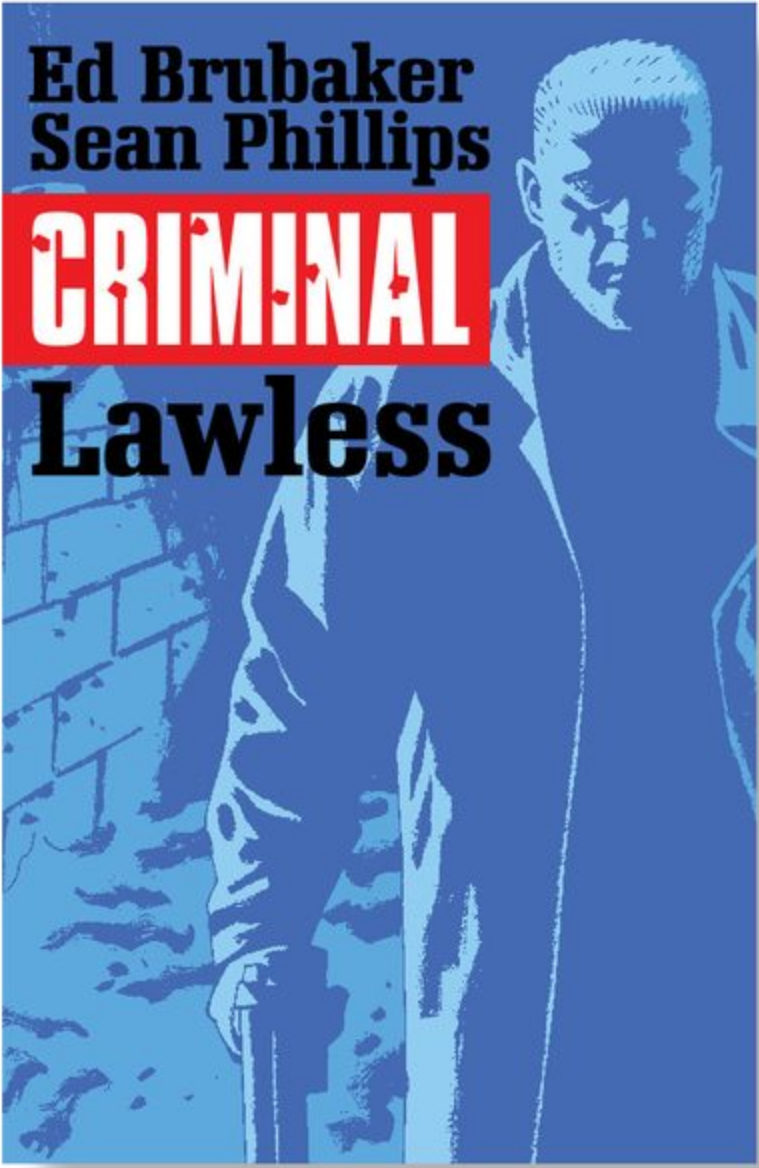
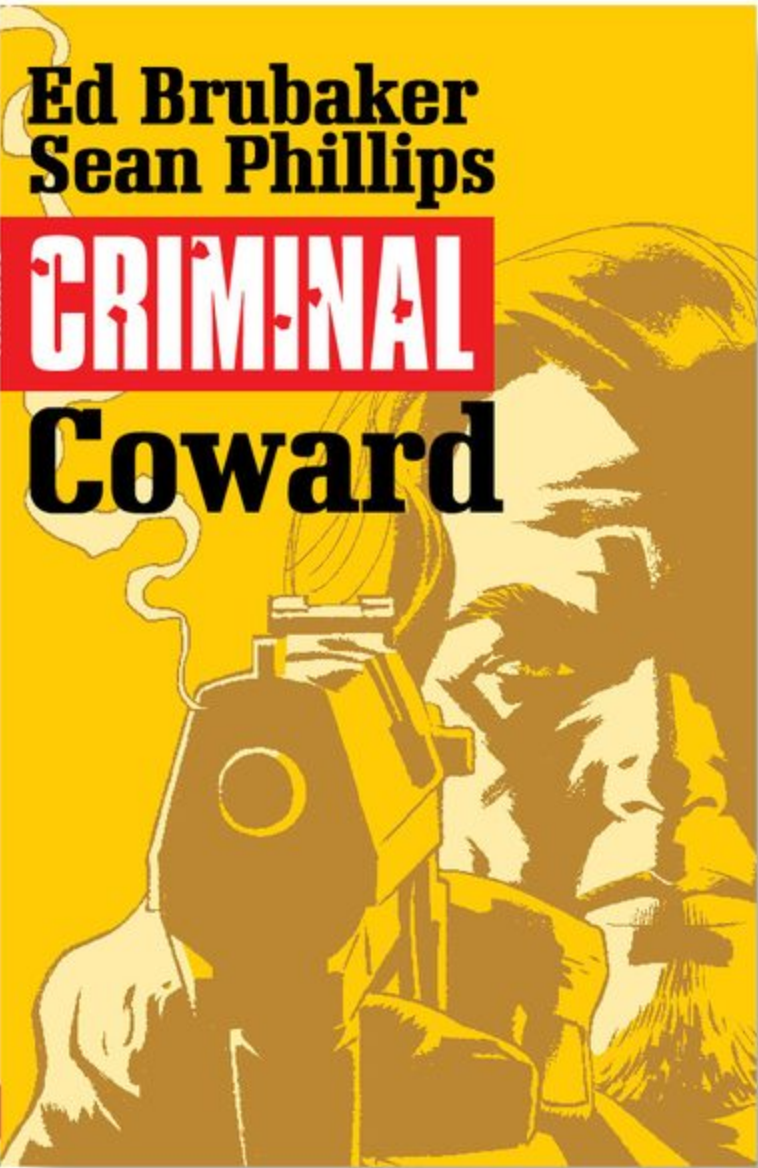
But to Heflin and Hunter's immense credit and their brilliant performances (this is one of Hunter's greatest roles) we don't hate them. We can't. We get that they are damaged men – and that there is something about the world, something about what is expected of masculinity, that can twist these two men and turn them crazy. The resulting movie is heartbreaking – Lee will turn his gun on his own son, but that gun doesn't offer simple domination – in many ways he's powerless here. And that makes him, to the viewer, express a different kind of power. Absolute despair. And openness. And as he breaks down to Davy – more human. And some powerful men were significantly stirred by this.

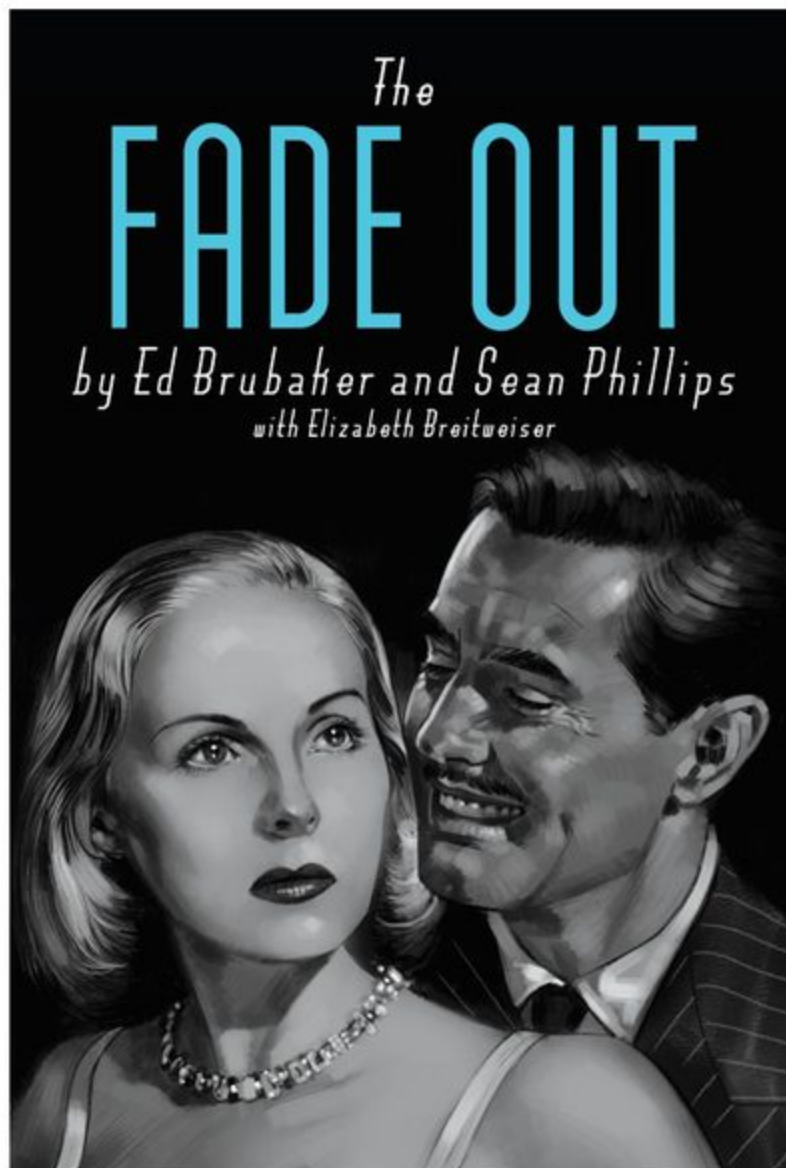
One of those powerful men was the fearsome (and hated by many) Columbia studio head, Harry Cohn. According to Karlson (in an interview with Todd McCarthy and Richard Thompson), Cohn was moved beyond his own comfortable measure. Said Karlson:

"There was no tougher man in the whole world, and I had the pleasure of seeing this man sit in a projection room, with Freddie Kohlmar and myself, crying at Gunman's Walk. At the end of that picture, he was literally crying. Harry Cohn crying! Freddie Kohlmar got up; he was so embarrassed he walked out... Then I started to get out and he stopped me, Harry Cohn, and he said, 'Wait a minute.' He now bawled out the projectionist for turning the lights on, because nobody turns any lights on unless he gives the order, presses the button. He was so moved by that picture because he had two sons and this was a story about a father and two sons. He identified completely with that motion picture and he said to me, 'You're going to be the biggest director in this business and I'm going to make sure you are.'"

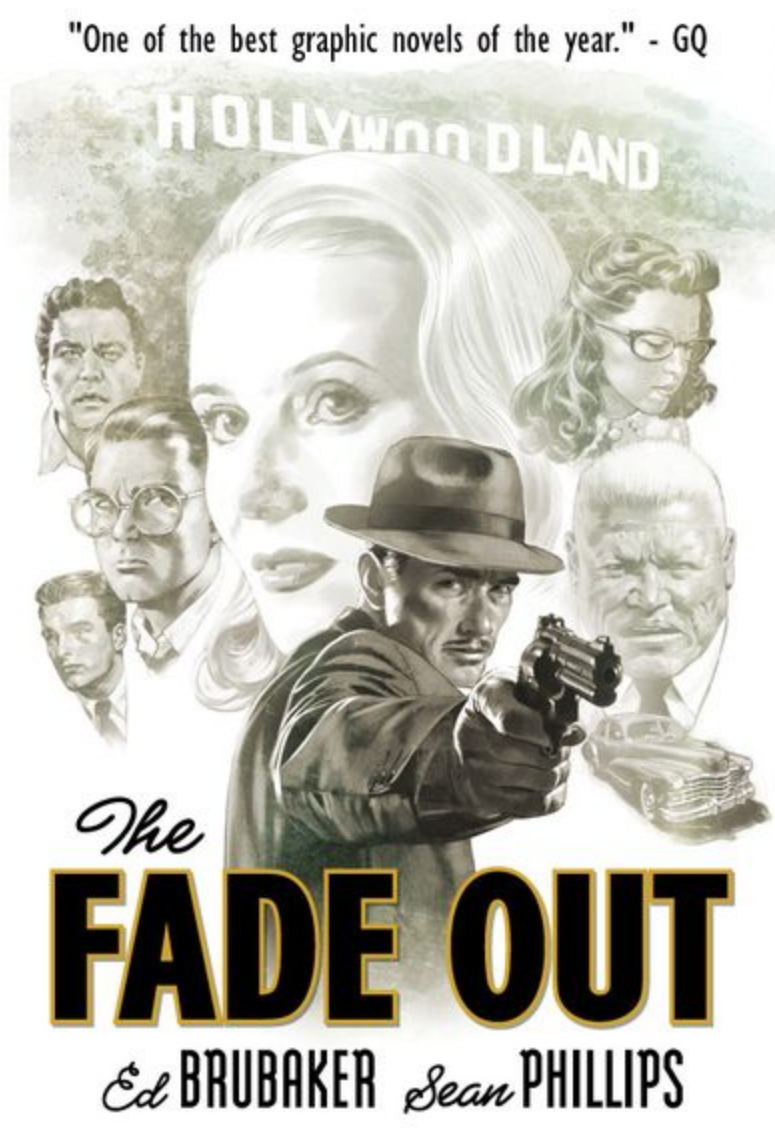
"Wouldn't you know, that's the last picture he was ever associated with."

"He went to Phoenix, Arizona, and died."

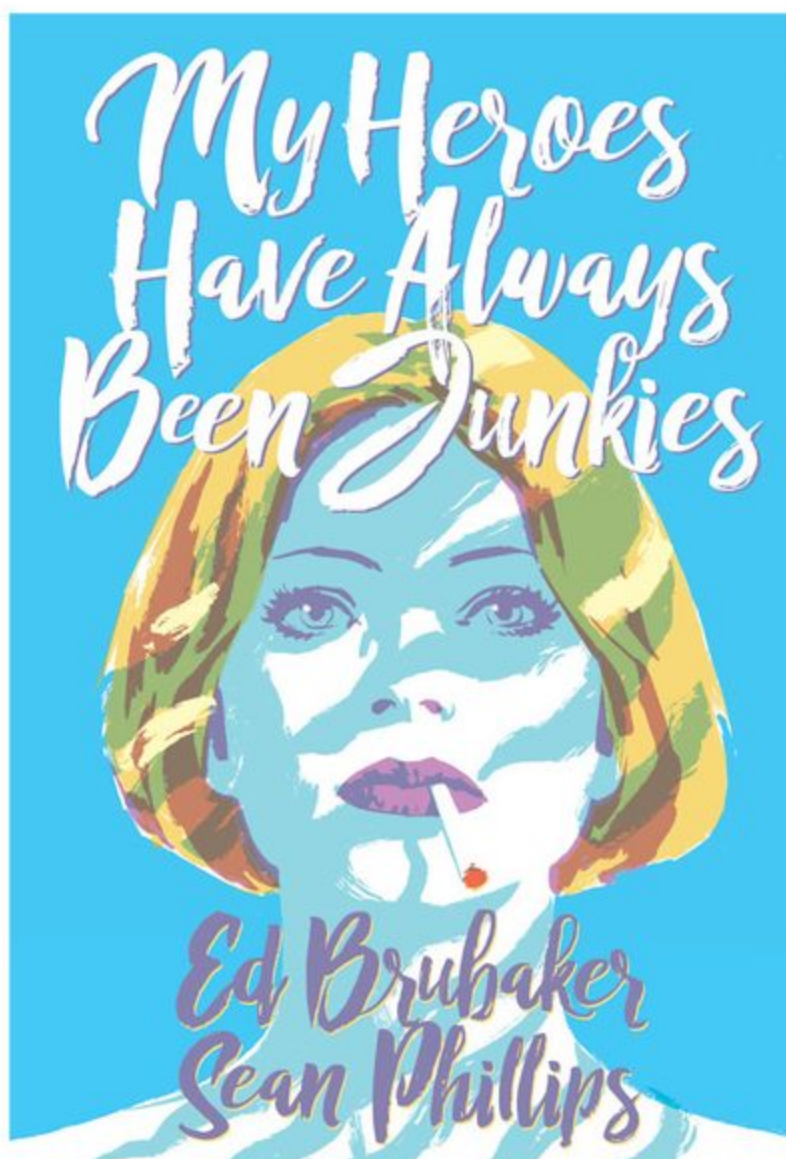




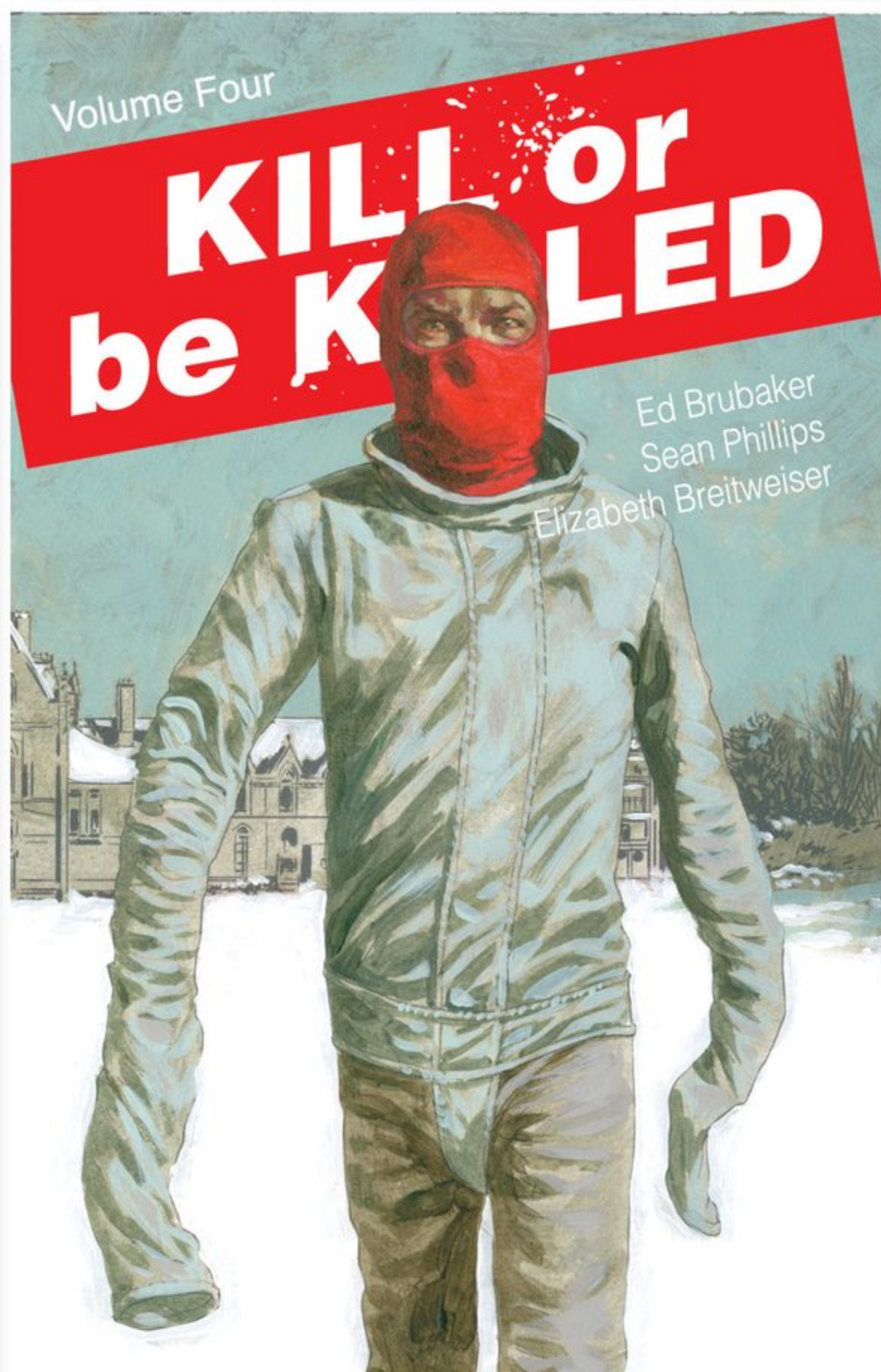
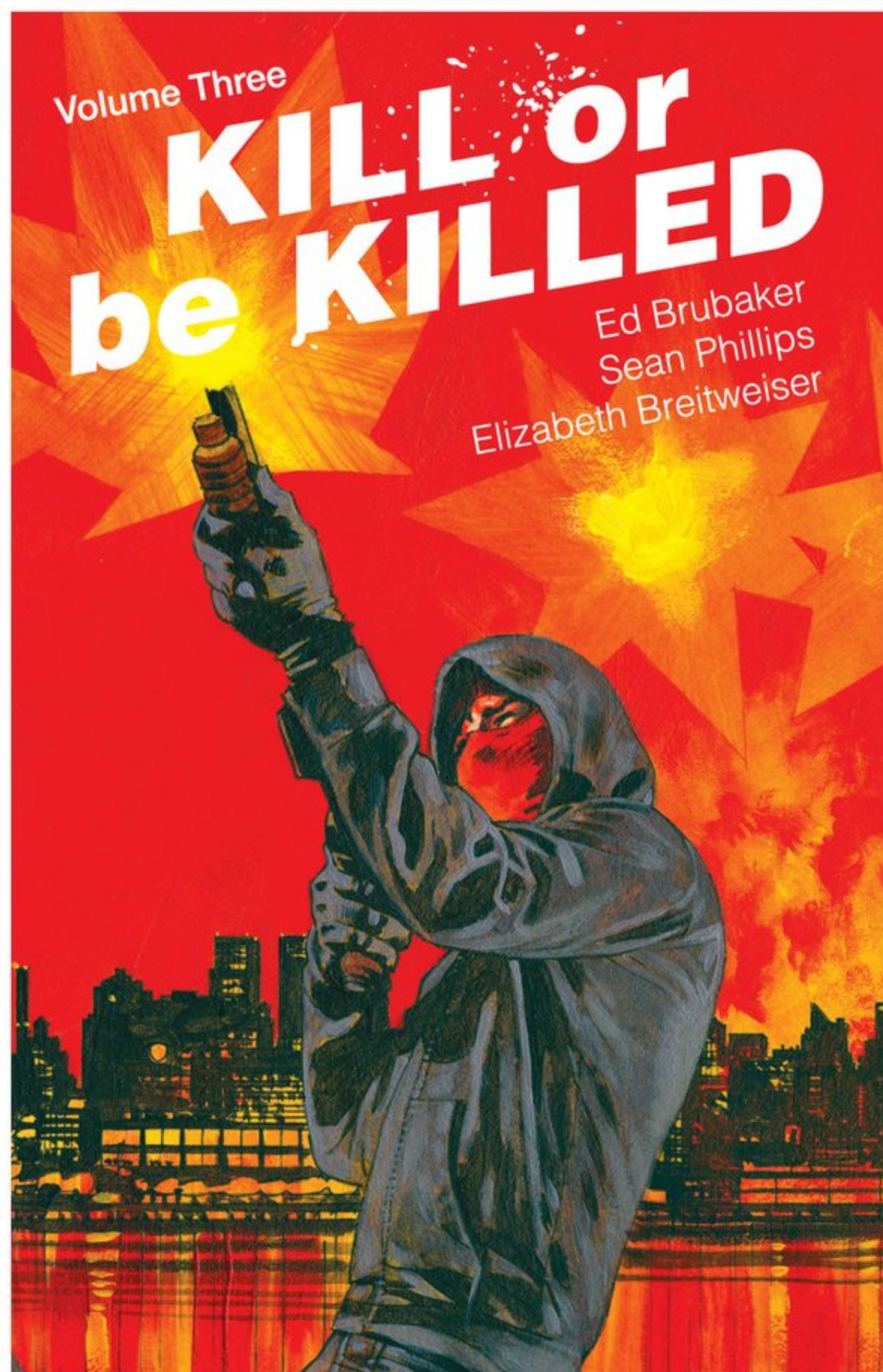
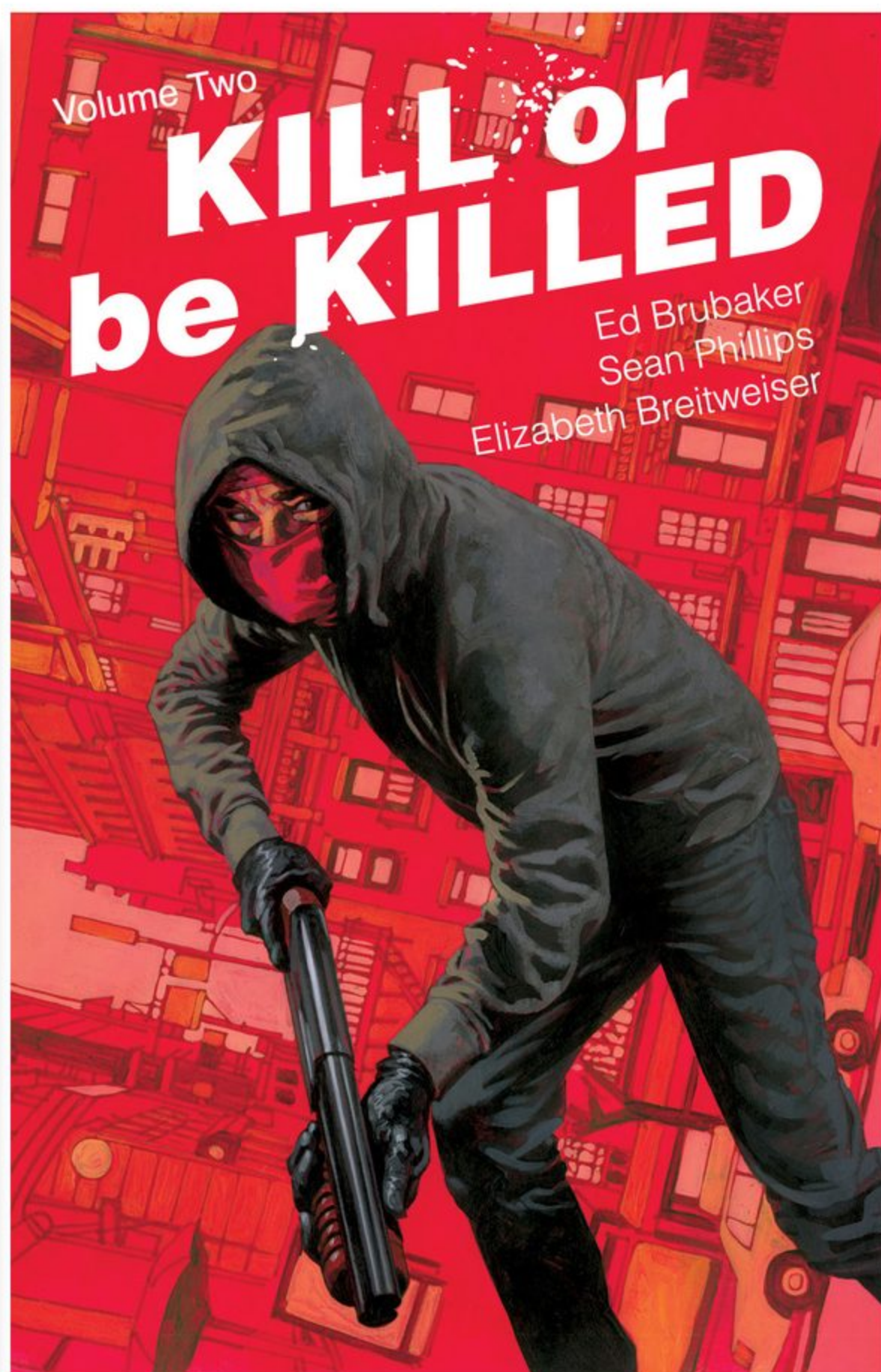
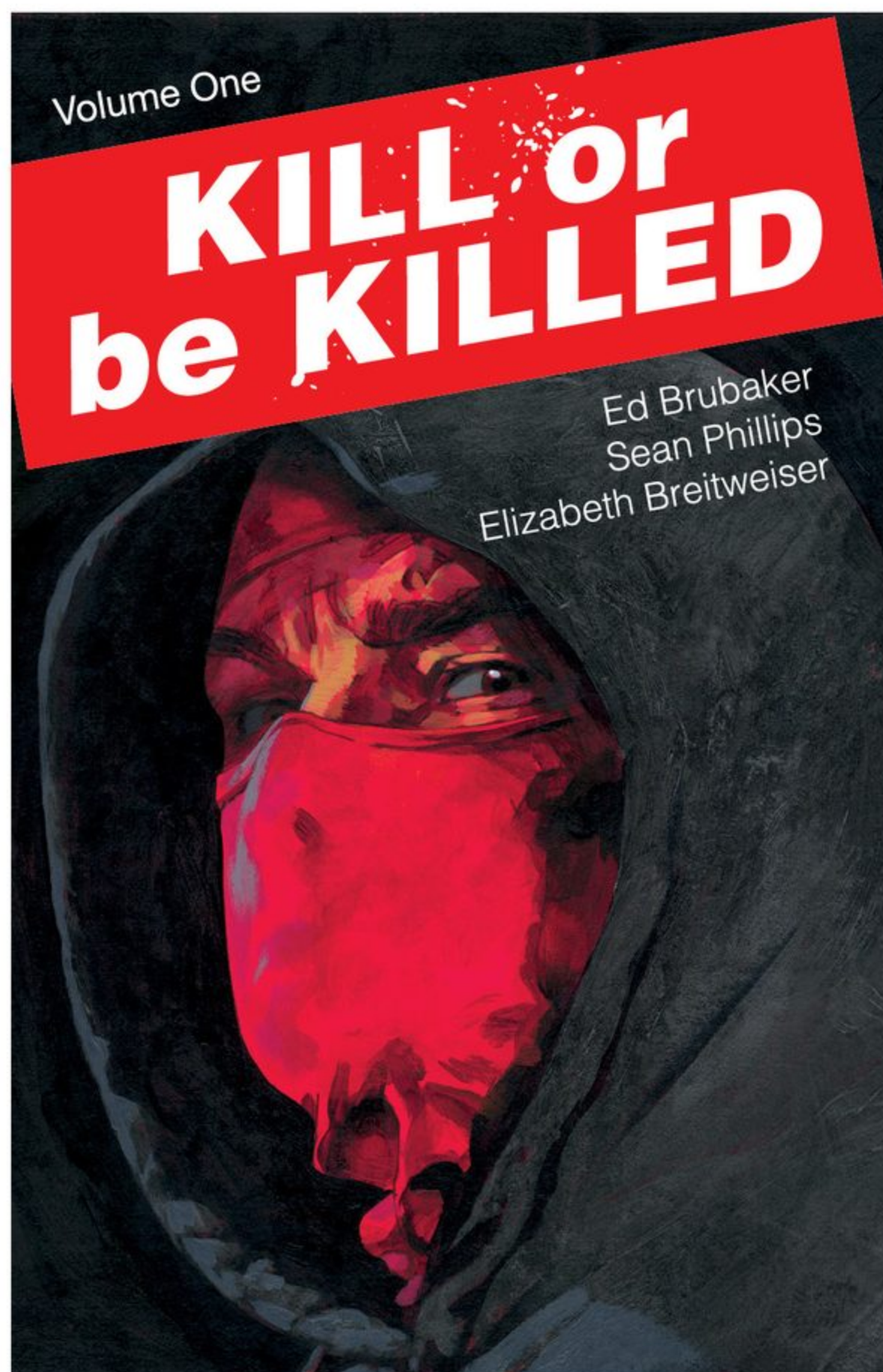
"CRIMINAL is equal parts John Woo's THE KILLER, Stanley Kubrick's THE KILLING, and Francis Ford Coppola's THE GODFATHER."
- Playboy Magazine



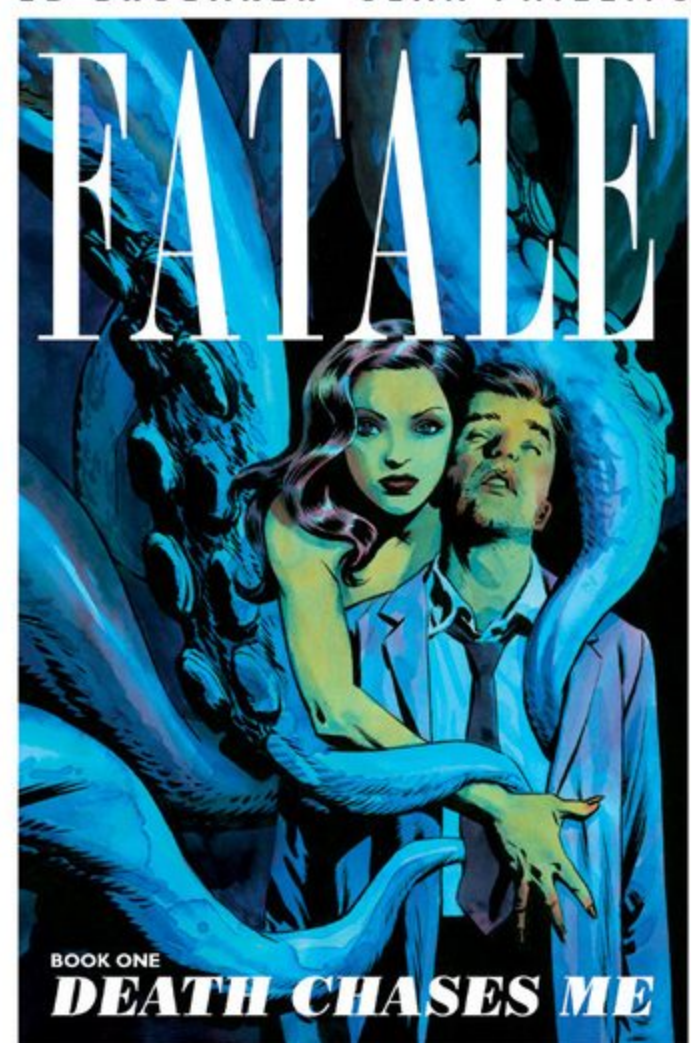
"One of comics dream teams delivers their best story yet in THE FADE OUT, an old Hollywood murder mystery draped against HUAC and the Red Scare."
- New York Magazine



Newsweek's Best Comic Books of 2018
Thrillist's Best Comics & Graphic Novels of 2018
Eisner Winner - Best Original Graphic Novel



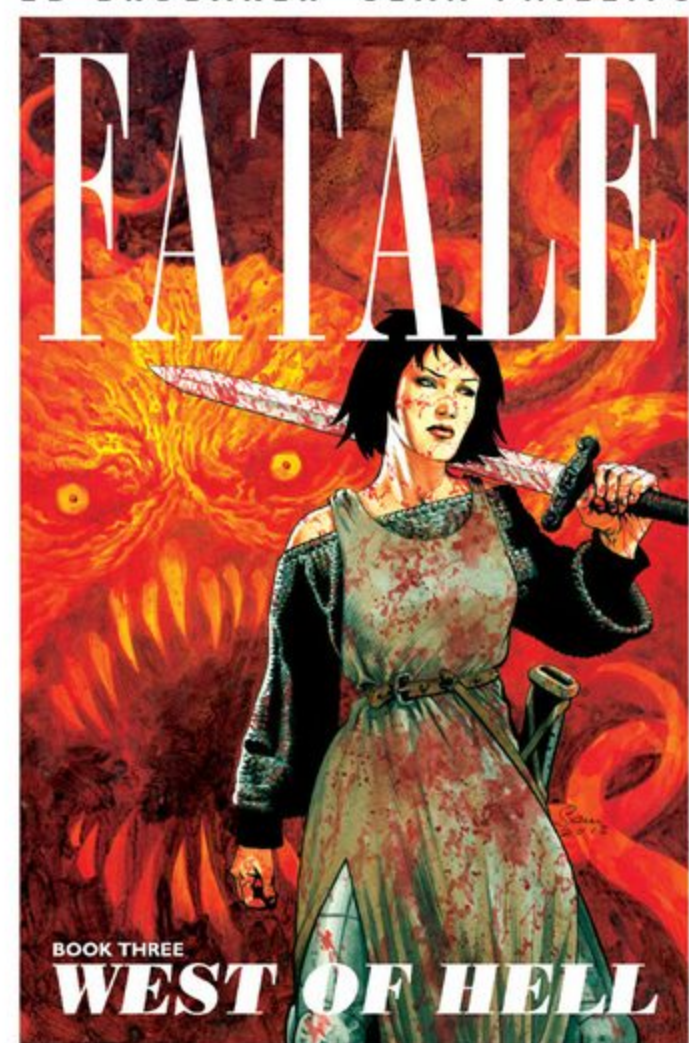
ED BRUBAKER SEAN PHILLIPS



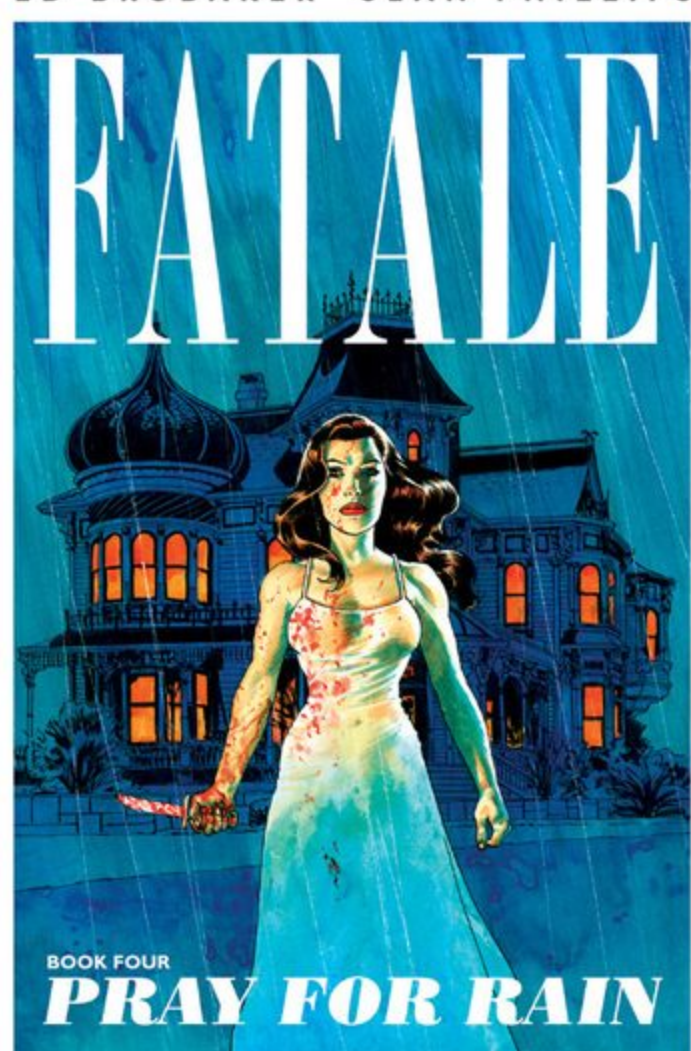
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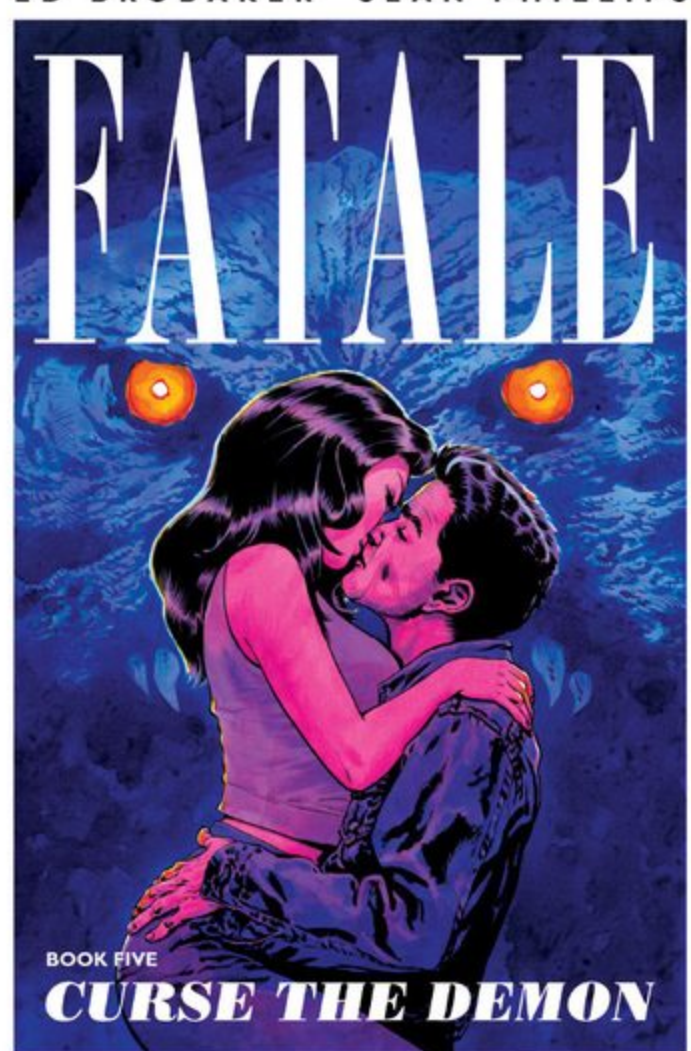
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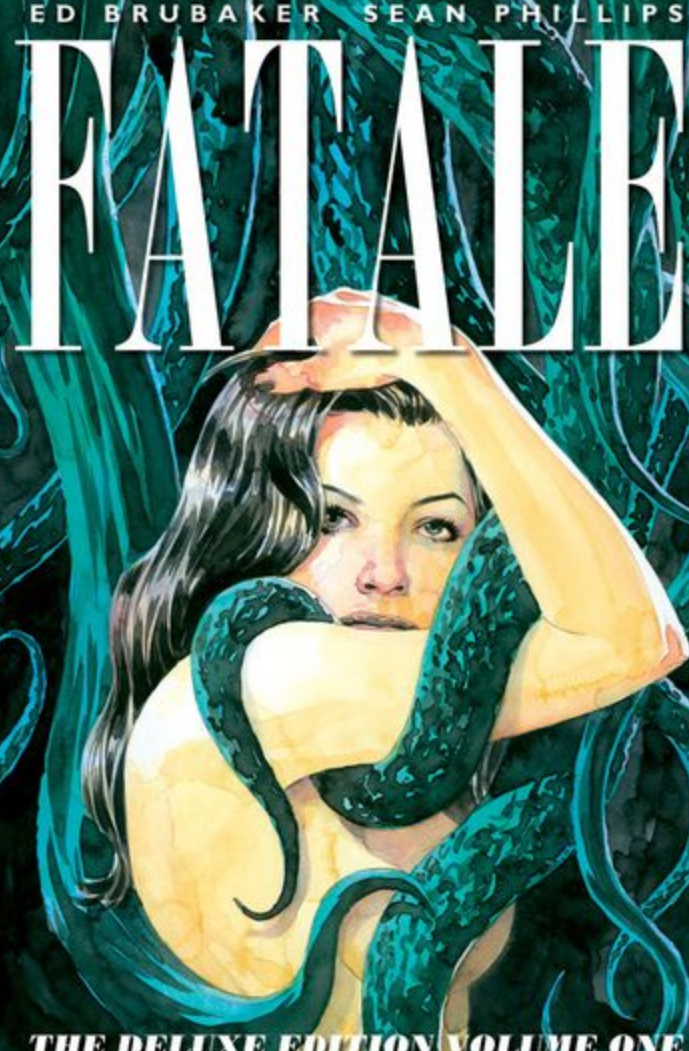
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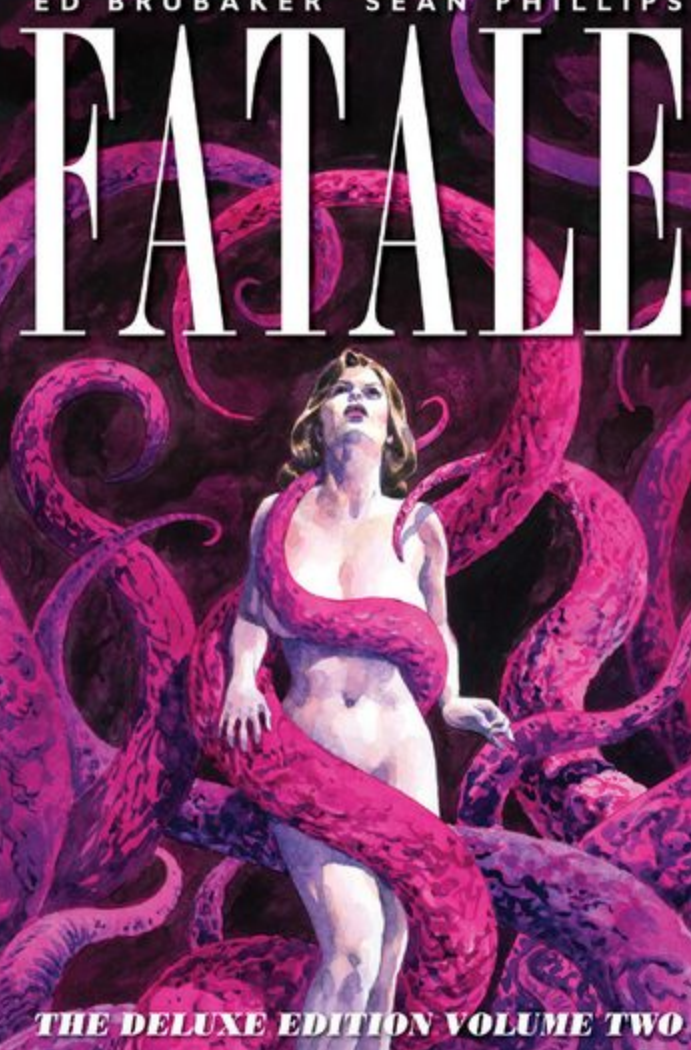
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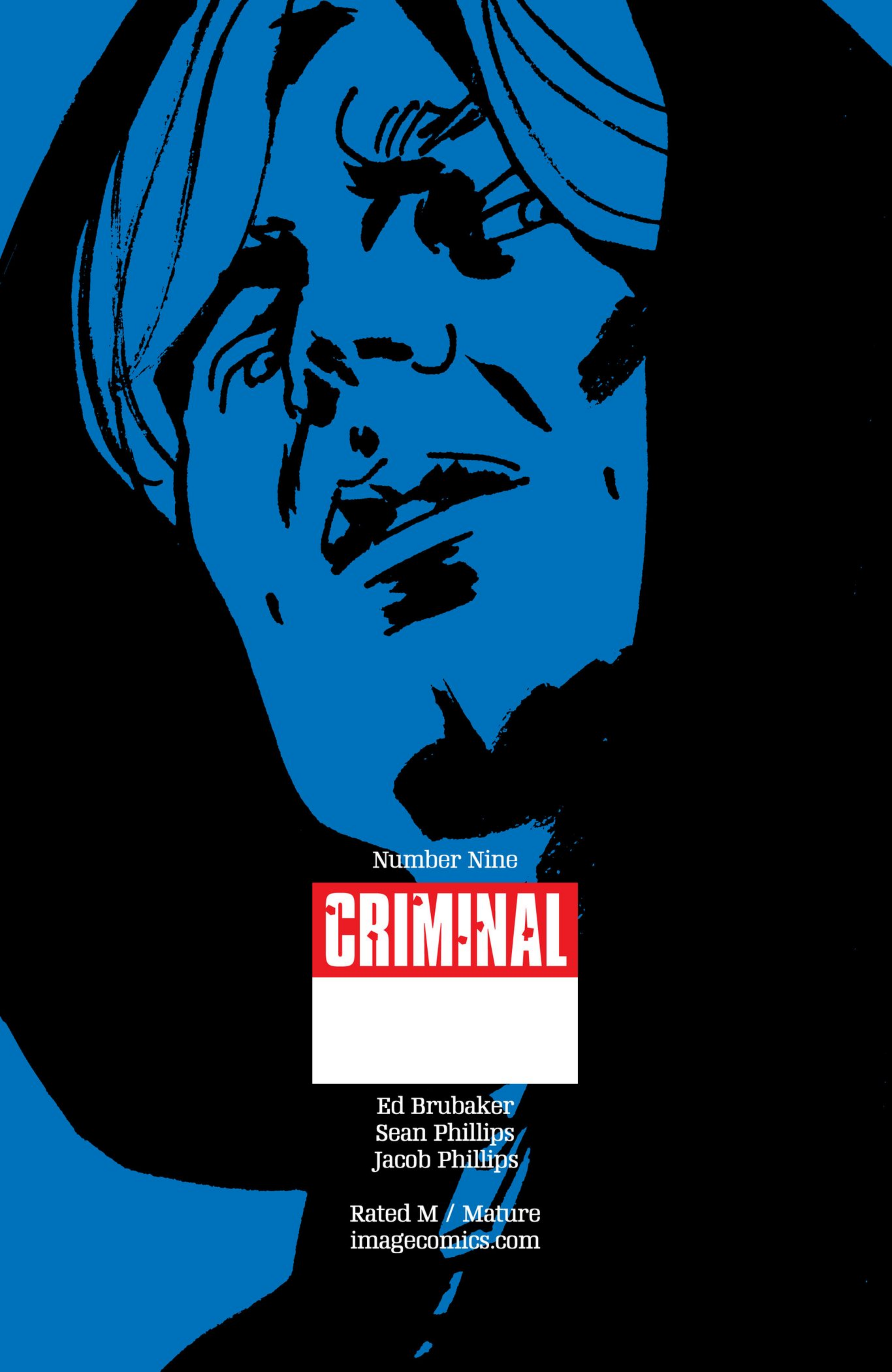
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"Immortality may be a double-edged sword, but it's one the intoxicating Jo wields with a boundless grace in this addictive page-turner."
- Publishers Weekly



Number Nine

CRIMINAL

Ed Brubaker
Sean Phillips
Jacob Phillips

Rated M / Mature
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